The **Ponderosa**

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

September 1996

From under My Brim

by Barry Breckling

Black and White Weasel

People admire some members of the weasel family, like the ferrets and otters. They're cute and slinky and full of fun. We can identify with them. Other members of the family, like the minks, sables, and ermines, have been admired so much that they've ended up as fur coats. There are some members of the family, however, that few of us admire, at least up close.

One well-known member of the weasel family is seldom seen, but its nearness is often detected. Compared with some of its relatives, like the sleek and agile ferrets, minks, and otters, this animal is rather chubby and slow. Compared with other relatives, like the stalwart badger and the ferocious wolverine, this animal seems downright lethargic. Nevertheless, the animal in question often wanders about appearing completely oblivious to the sorts of dangers that concern other mammals of comparable size and strength. The animal's scientific name is *Mephitis mephitis.*

Dictionary definitions of the word *mephitis* include phrases like: a poisonous, foul-smelling gas emitted from the earth, an offensive smell, a stench. This animal has earned a double-dose of the definitions, as you may have noticed from its scientific name. And even though you might not have known that it's in the weasel family, I bet you've guessed that the animal I'm talking about is the notorious, infamous, odoriferous skunk.

Three species of skunks live in North America, but the kind you're most likely to see (and smell) is *Mephitis mephitis*—the striped skunk. Striped skunks have never been on a list of threatened or endangered species, and they probably never will be. They flourish throughout the United States, Mexico, and southern Canada, and their success must have something to do with their special defensive equipment.

The striped skunk is about the size of a large, rotund house cat, and it has sharply contrasting black and white fur. The background fur is black, and the white fur is shaped like a V, with the point of the V on the top of the skunk's head and the extensions of the V running along each side of its backbone, down to its tail. The skunk, like other animals with bright or highly contrasting colors, is giving fair warning to would-be foes.

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. . . and more!

recycled paper

Skunks also have behavioral warning signals, as I discovered one evening back in my cross-country days. I was running down a narrow dirt road that had thick vegetation on both sides. As I rounded a curve, I suddenly found myself in the company of a striped skunk. The skunk was heading in the direction I was going, but its pace was much slower than mine. Passing the animal didn't seem like a good plan, so I slowed down to a jog—almost a jog in place—and lagged way behind. Every now and then, as one of us got distracted or bored, the distance between us decreased, and each time I got within five or six feet of the skunk, it arched its tail in a meaningful manner, and I slowed down some more. It must have been a half mile and a whole hour before that skunk finally left the road.

All members of the weasel family have scent glands, but striped skunks are exceptionally well endowed. They can shoot two fine streams of noxious yellow fluid as far as 12 feet with incredible accuracy, and they always aim for their victim's eyes. The fluid has an effect much like tear gas; it causes painful, burning eyes and copious, blinding tears.

Fortunately, skunks don't seem to be extremely trigger happy with their scent glands. When a skunk feels threatened, it will often arch its tail, growl, snarl, hiss, stamp its feet, click its teeth, and raise its hind legs, before it lets loose with its ultimate weapon.

Although we're all familiar with *eau de skunk*, most of us haven't experienced a direct hit. It's more likely that we've dealt with a pet who challenged a skunk and hopefully learned a lesson. If a skunk has anointed one of your pets with a serious dose of its oily spray, you already know how hard it is to get rid of the aroma. The old tomato juice scrub works fairly well. Sometimes. My dog was hit one night, didn't learn her lesson, and took another hit the next night. Over the course of three days, I dosed that dog's fur with tomato juice, Crest toothpaste, ammonia, and more tomato juice before I could bear to let her back in the house, and even after that, the faint smell of skunk lingered for weeks.

Understandably, skunks have few persistent predators. It may be that great horned owls and golden eagles have a poorly developed sense of smell, because they're the only species that prey on skunks during times of plenty. During hard times, hungry foxes, bobcats, badgers, coyotes, and mountain lions sometimes risk being sprayed for the sake of an easy meal.

Although skunks can see only slightly better than worms, they can smell and hear quite well. They're nocturnal animals, and they roam through the night, sniffing and listening in their search for things to eat. Their favorite foods seem to be insects, and their favorite insects seem to be grasshoppers, beetles, crickets, and their larvae. But they also eat grubs, eggs, small rodents, amphibians, reptiles, carrion, and fruit. They use their long, sharp claws to dig creatures up from under the ground. Many of the small conical holes you see when you're out and about are the holes skunks have left in their search for food.

Skunks, bats, and foxes seem to get rabies more often than other mammals. Back in the early 1970s, at Manzanita Point, a rabid skunk wandered into a tent where a man and his son were sleeping. The skunk bit the boy, and the boy cried out. The father woke up, grabbed the skunk, and choked it to death, but he also got bitten in the process. Both of them had to get a painful series of shots to neutralize the rabies virus. The rumor of rabies spread, and park attendance dropped off for a year or so.

Skunks would never do well in a mammal popularity contest, but they do have a valuable role to play in the intricate web of life. They consume vast quantities of worms, beetles, grasshoppers, grubs, and other larvae, and some farmers believe that their appetite for small rodents reduces the damage the rodents do to our lawns, crops, and hay fields.

Coe Park provides a lovely setting for observing and appreciating the animals of the inner coast ranges, and most park visitors feel lucky when they get a close-up look at one. But even the most enthusiastic lovers of wildlife prefer to observe our aromatic little black and white weasels from a nice, safe distance.

Tributes
by Barbara Bessey

Glen Knepper: 1918–1996. The Pine Ridge Association marks the passing of Glen Knepper, who was a long-time friend of the park. He died on May 17, 1996, in the house in which he was born in Gilroy. He was a cattle rancher and farmer all of his life. A great story teller as well, he could captivate any audience with his experiences of running cattle in what is now Coe Park. Some of the places he knew and loved are some of the same ones that we enjoy today: the Coit property, Manzanita Point, Madrone Soda Springs, China Hole, and Gilroy Hot Springs. I recall a special backcountry event held soon after I became a Coe Park Volunteer at which Glen Knepper and his son Steve sat with us one evening, watching the stars appear, and reminiscing about what life was like in the earlier ranching days. He had seen and experienced life in Coe Park in a way that we never had. But one thing was clear: we shared his love for the land.

In 1987, Greg Delander and Erin O'Roark, honors history students (of PRA member and teacher Teddy Goodrich) from Gilroy High School interviewed Glen Knepper. He shared with them a close encounter. Here are some excerpts from this interview.

"Right above the upper part of the Coit dam, there's a little holding field. George Wilson's holding field. Years ago, the Wilsons used horses to put a little dam in there. Then there was a little set of corrals right there. Three of us, we had been out, and we had seen some steers. They were old Arizona steers. These men, they'd outsmart these cattle. They had ways of figuring them out. I think it was three, three or four we seen, and it was real hot. And we took what cattle we had, and then we had supper.

"And these two old guys decided, well, let's go back and stay at George Wilson's corrals. We'll only get a couple hours sleep, but then we'll hit these steers real early. And we did. We got there; it was way late. And we laid this canvas down. That's all we laid on. We didn't have no covers 'cause it was warm. And I slept in the middle. These old guys talked all night in their sleep, and one gritted his teeth. Every once in a while, I'd turn over, and I could feel somethin' wiggling; you know, could just feel somethin'. And then I'd lay back, and, doggone, I never once thought it was what it was.

"So we got up, and it was still dark. I don't think we laid down, oh, two or three hours. And then we just flipped the canvas together. Then we went out to be out there when the steers went out to feed. We happened to be lucky, and we got'em. We got back there where we had camped. Right there by the canvas was this old rattlesnake layin'. You could see where we had laid the canvas, and he just ducked right back into his little hole. And where he would come up, this canvas wouldn't let him come clear out. He didn't bother anybody else after that. From that day on, I will sit down on a rock, but I would never, I don't think I could ever, sleep out on the ground in a sleeping bag."

Roger Tory Peterson: 1908–1996. Roger Tory Peterson died at his home in Old Lyme, Connecticut, on July 28, 1996. He is probably best known for his field guides of eastern and western birds, but he was also a naturalist, artist, photographer, and conservationist.

In the September/October 1996 issue of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, he chronicled his evolution as a bird artist. He describes how, in the early 1930s, birders "shifted from the shotgun school of birding to the field glass." In his field guide to eastern birds, which was first published in 1934, he added arrows to each plate to aid the reader in locating particularly relevant field marks. This use of arrows became known as the "Peterson System" of identification, and it has been picked up by authors of other natural history field guides.

Roger Tory Peterson loved watching birds; his own life list contained almost 5,000 species of birds observed (or heard) on all of the continents in the world. He was very able to identify birds by ear, as is evident from this inspirational excerpt from his book, *Birds Over America*: "After a few years, even the most fanatical bird chaser takes things easier. He no longer gets up at the crack of dawn on every field trip. I remember how the rest of my party once despaired of me when near Cobb's Island, Virginia. They got up at daybreak to see what they could find before breakfast. I stayed in bed. In the two hours they were gone they listed forty-two species. My own list when I came downstairs was forty. I had heard them all from my pillow and only once did I raise my head to look out the window—when a flock of curlew flew by."

Eldon Grey, editor of *Birder's World*, writes "while it is easy to remember Peterson for his monumental contributions to birdwatching, he did so much more. He was ahead of his time in anticipating and understanding conservation issues and environmental problems. His twenty-two honorary degrees and the Presidential Medal of Freedom reflect the high esteem in which he was held. He was the premier nature spokesman of his day" (October 1996, p. 6).

The 1996 Coe Backcountry Weekend: Visitor Responses

In the May issue of *The Ponderosa,* Park Superintendent Kay S. Robinson described this year's Coe Backcountry weekend as a resounding success. She stated that a total of 361 vehicles carrying 1,157 people entered the park to explore the Orestimba Wilderness and other locales such as Mustang Peak, Coon Creek, Pacheco Falls, and Burra Burra Peak. Her article stimulated several individuals to write letters in response. One opinion, shared by several individuals, is that the event is held too close to the wilderness area and that visitors who wish to see this area of the park will experience more of a wilderness experience if they reach the area on foot. An opposing viewpoint was expressed by some who thought that, because of the popularity of the event, visitors should have more frequent access to the Orestimba.

Concerns about preservation of the wilderness were studied at length by the Backcounrtry Steering Committee and the event's other organizers earlier this spring. A flyer, which is included as an insert to this issue of the newsletter, was prepared and distributed at this year's backcountry event, so that the public would become more aware of what the wilderness is, where it is located, and what the issues are concerning ethical use of the wilderness.

Reprinted below are excerpts from two letters that Kay Robinson wrote to explain her thoughts about the proper role the park should play in preservation of resources versus public use.

Coe Park: Preservation vs. Public Use

Kay. S. Robinson
Park Superintendent

The Coe Backcountry weekend event began in 1993 as a Trail Dedication Ceremony for the newly constructed Rooster Comb, Orestimba Creek, and Orestimba Corral (now Alquist) Trails. Because of its enormous success, drawing over 1,500 participants, it was decided to establish it as an annual event. This popularity also indicated the strong desire of the public to gain access to the east side of the park, wilderness and non-wilderness areas, alike.

The main staging area for visitors is within 300 yards of Henry W. Coe State Wilderness, a designated wilderness with special laws pertaining to its management. Because of concern for carrying capacities and the quality of the experience for the park user, the number of vehicles was limited to 330 vehicles per day and the event was limited to once a year. This has resulted in an average Coe Backcountry Weekend attendance in 1994, 1995, and 1996 of about 1,100 persons: not a wilderness experience in the true sense of the word, but a glimpse into another realm of Coe Park.

It is hoped that this will increase awareness of Coe. Perhaps, as a result of public interest, funds may become available for development of the east side of Coe Park. When development on the east side of the park becomes a reality, public access will be permitted as far as Dowdy Ranch, about five miles from the wilderness. This will allow the public to drive from Highway 152 at Bell Station six miles into the park to a practical and logical staging area. In the public's eyes, a year-round or, perhaps, seasonal opening of the east side of the park would be much preferred to a once-per-year event. It is likely that the Coe Backcountry Weekend event will cease upon the development and opening of Bell Station.

Those values unique to the wilderness are a part of Coe Park's legacy. While the edge of the wilderness is accessible to vehicle traffic at this time on a once-a-year basis, it is a resource that cannot be compromised on an unlimited basis. The natural carrying capacity of the park, as well as the workload carrying capacity of the park staff and volunteers, dictate the frequency and intensity of our Coe Backcountry Weekend. For example, Coe Park volunteers gave 819 hours of donated time this year to prepare for and staff the two-day event. Other groups also participated, including bicycle, amateur radio, and Explorer Scout groups. Park staff were actively involved, not only with the weekend itself, but before and after the event, as roads needed grading, and chemical toilets, tables, tents, water trucks, troughs, barricades, and signs needed to be installed and later removed.

The administration of the park is a fine balance between preservation of the resources, allowance for public use, perpetuation of ecosystems, development of facilities, and meeting the needs of all of the people of the state of California. I feel we have provided for many of these values and needs in the annual Coe Backcountry Weekend.

The Henry W. Coe State Park Home Page (http://www.garlic.com/coe)

by David Perrin

A little over seven months ago, the PRA ventured into cyberspace and posted a home page on the world wide web for Henry W. Coe State Park. Many thanks to those who have visited the site and have given us feedback on the home page. For those of you who have not yet visited our web site, the home page provides information about how to find the park, as well as its history, activities (mountain biking, backpacking, interpretive hikes, etc.), trail profiles, and information regarding special events such as the Mother's Day Breakfast, the Fall Barbecue, and the Coe Backcountry Weekend. There is also information about the Pine Ridge Association, including how to become a member and a Coe Park volunteer. All of this is combined with graphics, photographs, and art work depicting the park.

This effort was made possible by a collaboration with Wes Rolley, who has had experience in setting up home pages for other organizations. Wes was introduced to the membership at the association's annual meeting held in February of this year.

Coming soon to the home page will be a photo contest. The contest is open to everybody. Photographs can be posted directly to the home page or submitted by mail. We will scan mailed-in entries and then post them to the home page. The winning photographer is eligible for a free Henry W. Coe State Park T-shirt. So get out those old photos and pick out a winner. The rules for the contest are available on the home page and at the Coe Park headquarters.

Did You Know?

The pacific madrone (*Arbutus menziesii* Purch) was used extensively to produce charcoal for use in gun powder. DPinion

Time to Run for the PRA Board

The Pine Ridge Association will hold its annual election for Board of Directors in December. The terms of two directors expire at the end of this year. Now is the time to prepare your candidacy statement and send it to the Board's Secretary, Owen Melroy, 3285 Oak View Court, Morgan Hill, CA 95037.

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

The most important qualification for a Board member is a willingness to attend Board meetings and to 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 Coe Park volunteer, meetings and board-related activities count toward volunteer hours. If you would like to attend a Board meeting to see what they are like, the next one will be held on Monday, October 28, in Gilroy at the Coe Sector office starting at 7:30 p.m. Please call PRA Chair Kevin Gilmartin (415/851-7813) to get a copy of the next meeting's agenda and to obtain instructions on how to reach the meeting location.

We use the special nonprofit bulk-rate mailing permit for sending out association-related materials. However, this means that some members may not receive their newsletters or materials for several 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 15, 1996.** Please send your statements to Owen at the address above. (If you plan to nominate someone else, please do so at least two weeks earlier.) Your statement might be a few paragraphs long and might contain information like how long you have been a PRA member, why you became interested in Coe Park, ways that you have served the park or other volunteer activities in which you have benefited the public, any special qualifications or experience that you have, and specific plans that you have for improving the park as a Board member.

If you have any questions about what it would be like to be a Board member or if you would like additional guidance on putting together a candidate statement, please call Owen at 408/779-2238.

Membership & Contributions
by Lee Dittmann

As of August 25th, the number of PRA memberships grew to 344. Thank you all for your support, and welcome to the Pine Ridge Association!

Curry & Christine Bartlett, Huber Heights, Ohio
Daniel & Cari Benefiel, Morgan Hill
Randy Berthold, Sunnyvale
Carlton Bonham, San José
Kendra Carlisle, Morgan Hill
Stephanie Charles, Mountain View
Greg Gorham, Santa Cruz
Frank D. Kortum, Los Angeles
Leslie Larson, Cupertino
Amy Lauterbach, Palo Alto
Ken & Suzette Mack, San José
Greg Miller, San José
Carl & Birgitte Moyer, Portola Valley
Patrick Perez, Morgan Hill
Mike Rampelberg family, San José
David B. Ring, Palo Alto
Sherry Stigge, Gilroy
Will Taylor, Palo Alto
Rick Thurber, San Francisco
Steven & Laura Welch & family, Gilroy
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph G. Wirth, Los Altos
Tori Woodard & Patrick Diehl, Berkeley
James Yurchenko, Palo Alto

We would like to give a special thanks to **Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Wirth** for becoming **Life Family** members. Mr. & Mrs. Wirth join our other much appreciated Life members, whom we are happy to thank once again: Everett Allen, Larry J. Bernal, Jr., Barbara Bessey, Ann Briggs, Winslow Briggs, Paul Brown, Carl Clinger, Nancy Coe, Thomas Coe, Ruby Domino, Ron Erskine, Kevin Gilmartin, Larry Haimowitz, Albert Heckbert, Don Holmes, Dave Hough, Celia McCormack, Robert Patrie, Joseph Reader, Diane Rubida, Sierra Club Backpack Section, Mr. & Mrs. Robert G. Verbica, Peter Coe Verbica, and John Williams.

New Contributors to the Visitor Center Expansion Fund

Sheila & Bill Flodberg
Sandy Sill

United Way Payroll Deduction Contributions

Our thanks to these contributors for their generous donations through the United Way's payroll deduction plan:

James Fitzharris
David B. Hildebrand

Special Honorary Contributions

In honor of the wedding of **Judy Robinson and Barry Breckling** a generous donation has been made by **James Robinson**.

In honor of the wedding of **Judy and Barry Breckling** a generous donation to the Visitor Center Expansion Fund has been made by **Sheila & Bill Flodberg**.

In honor of the wedding of **Judy and Barry Breckling** a generous donation to the Visitor Center Expansion Fund has been made by **Jane Tracey**.

Coe Park Garage and Bake Sale a Success!

The Coe Park Garage and Bake Sale, which was held August 3 and 4 in Morgan Hill, raised almost $2,200. Proceeds will go towards the expansion of the visitor center. Barry Breckling, Judy Robinson, Sheila Flodberg, Millicent Kellogg, and Marlene Testaguzza worked hard to organize and put on the event. The donated items were graciously stored by Kay Robinson at the Coe Sector office. The committee members, plus Jane Tracey, Martie Sinclaire, and a dozen Coe Park volunteers spent many hours staffing the event. Thanks to everyone who supported the sale! And a special thanks to Carmen and Teri Patane, who camped at the garage sale site Friday and Saturday nights to guard the donated goods.

PRA Calendar

Thursday, September 26: The **full moon.** Also called the Harvest Moon. This year, there will also be a **total lunar eclipse**. The moon will rise with the earth's shadow already starting to move across its face. Totality will be at 7:19 p.m., and the eclipse will end 70 minutes later.

Saturday, September 28: The annual Coe Park **Fall Barbecue** at the park headquarters. This year, back by popular demand, there will also be a raffle. The proceeds will go towards the Visitor Center Expansion Fund. You do not need to be present to win a prize. Call the park headquarters for additional information (408/779-2728).

Sunday, September 29: Want to see a tarantula? Join Coe Park Volunteer Larry Haimowitz as he leads a **Tarantula Walk** at 8:00 a.m. and again at 1:00 p.m. Meet at the Coe Park headquarters. For additional information, call the headquarters (408/779-2728).

Saturday & Sunday, October 19 & 20: Another **Barbed Wire Fest at Coe**. Help remove barbed wire from various backcountry areas. To receive additional information or to sign up, please call Ranger Doug Meyers at the Sector Office (408/848-4006).

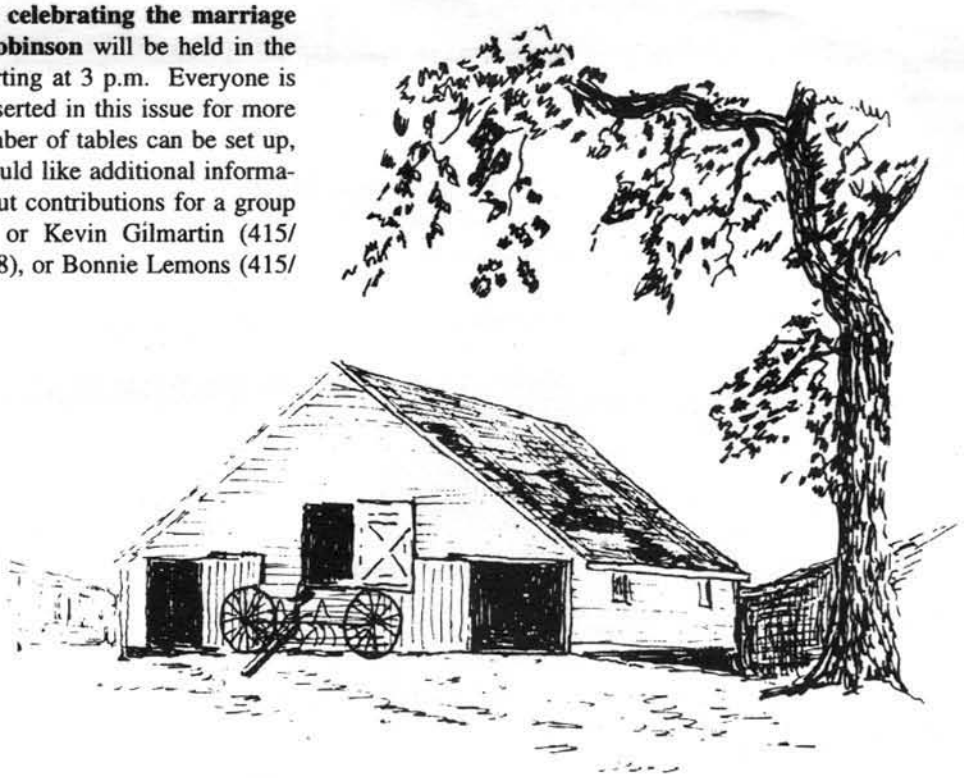
Saturday, October 26: A **potluck celebrating the marriage of Barry Breckling and Judy Robinson** will be held in the campground area of Coe Park starting at 3 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend. See the flyer inserted in this issue for more information. So that the right number of tables can be set up, it is important to RSVP. If you would like additional information, either about the event or about contributions for a group gift, please call Bárbara Bessey or Kevin Gilmartin (415/851-7813), Lee Sims (415/726-4958), or Bonnie Lemons (415/726-7547).

Monday, October 28: The next regularly scheduled **meeting of the PRA's Board of Directors** will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Sector Office. Please call Chair Kevin Gilmartin for additional information or for directions (415/851-7813).

Saturday, November 9: Come to the next **Trail Day** at Coe Park from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Help work on various trails in the park. Bring gloves and sturdy shoes. To receive additional information or to sign up, please call Ranger Doug Meyers at the Sector Office (408/848-4006).

Saturday, November 30: Celebrate **Thanksgiving** at Coe Park. Everyone is invited to attend. Bring a dish and drinks to share. Volunteers are needed to cook or smoke turkeys. More information will be distributed later. Please call Barbara Bessey (415/851-7813) or the park headquarters (408/779-2728) if you would like to help with the planning of this event.

Periodic weekends: Join the San José Astronomical Association members as they view **celestial splendors above Coe Park.** The public is invited to attend. Call the Astronomical Association's events hotline to receive information about upcoming viewings at Coe Park (408/559-1221).



Come to the Giant Potluck

to celebrate the marriage of
volunteer **Judy Robinson** and ranger **Barry Breckling**

Judy and Barry were married May 18th at Coe Park
in a small ceremony attended by their family and close friends.
Now it is time for all of us to toast this marriage with food, drink, and friendship
—and the beauty of Coe around us.

Coe Park Headquarters
Saturday, October 26

Potluck: bring what you want to eat and what you want to share with your friends.
Also bring beverages to share.

Bring a funny, maybe embarrassing, story about Barry or Judy or both.

We start eating at 3 pm and finish when every plate is empty,
followed by a sunset hike to the monument.

If you wish to contribute to a gift, please let us know when you RSVP
—we will give you details then.

For further information or to RSVP call
Barbara Bessey & Kevin Gilmartin (415/851-7813) or
Lee Sims & Bonnie Lemons (415/726-4958 or -7547).

P.S. We will need help setting up, including moving tables,
so please let us know if you can come at noon and help us prepare for this event.

ON VISITING THE WILDERNESS

Henry W. Coe State Park is a magnificent wilderness resource for the state of California and its visitors. With freeways frequently strangled by rampant development, and orchards, fields, and hillside vanishing before the onslaughts and pressures of humanity's inexorable growth, the park is an incredible oasis: a refuge for a remarkable and diverse wildlife population; a reservoir for the complex gene pools that must be kept unconstrained to preserve and enrich our wildlife heritage; a sanctuary from the stresses of modern life; and a source of magnificence and beauty that restores the human spirit and brings peace of mind.

Wilderness is not a thing to be challenged. Rather, let it challenge you. Let it challenge you to enter it quietly; to explore its steep ridges and its deep valleys; to experience its magnificence during a violent winter storm; to listen to the incredible musical harmonies of its rushing streams; to appreciate its astonishing beauty on a warm spring day; to understand its dangers in the simmering heat of August; to stand still and watch a deer browse, a coyote hunt, a roadrunner sprint, or an eagle soar; and, above all, to let it challenge you to depart as quietly as you entered, leaving no trace behind you. The wilderness belongs to you but it also belongs to the coming generations. Their right to meet these challenges must not be compromised.

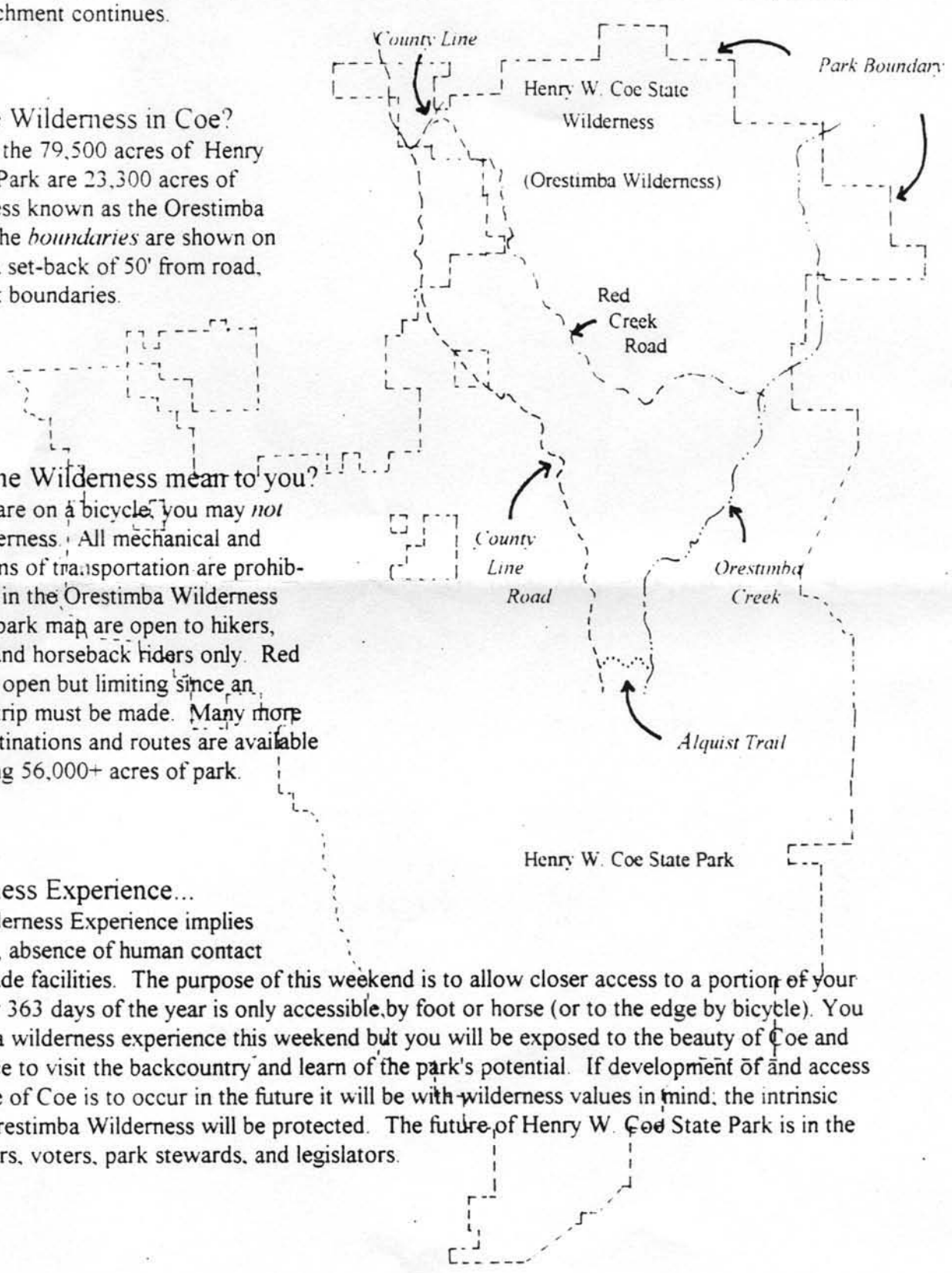
California State Parks *Pine Ridge Association*

What is a Wilderness?

The California Wilderness Act (1974) describes a wilderness as " ..an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain,...an area of relatively undeveloped land which has retained its primeval character... without permanent improvements or human habitation." Wilderness lands are set aside as a preserve for future generations. The benefit is to both humans and the natural community. Large undisturbed tracts of land provide precious habitat for plant and animal species which becomes more critical for the survival of species as human encroachment continues.

Where is the Wilderness in Coe?

Within the 79,500 acres of Henry W. Coe State Park are 23,300 acres of State Wilderness known as the Orestimba Wilderness. The *boundaries* are shown on the map with a set-back of 50' from road, trail, and creek boundaries.



What does the Wilderness mean to you?

If you are on a bicycle, you may *not* enter the Wilderness. All mechanical and motorized forms of transportation are prohibited. All trails in the Orestimba Wilderness shown on the park map are open to hikers, backpackers, and horseback riders only. Red Creek Road is open but limiting since an out-and-back trip must be made. Many more interesting destinations and routes are available in the remaining 56,000+ acres of park.

The Wilderness Experience...

A Wilderness Experience implies solitude, quiet, absence of human contact and human-made facilities. The purpose of this weekend is to allow closer access to a portion of your park which for 363 days of the year is only accessible by foot or horse (or to the edge by bicycle). You may not have a wilderness experience this weekend but you will be exposed to the beauty of Coe and have the chance to visit the backcountry and learn of the park's potential. If development of and access to the east side of Coe is to occur in the future it will be with wilderness values in mind; the intrinsic value of the Orestimba Wilderness will be protected. The future of Henry W. Coe State Park is in the hands of visitors, voters, park stewards, and legislators.

Pine Ridge Association
Henry W. Coe State Park
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Morgan Hill, CA 95038
(408) 779-2728

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The Ponderosa is a periodic 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 history, natural history, and management of the park are welcome. Please send submissions to the editors care of Henry W. Coe State Park, P.O. Box 846, Morgan Hill, CA 95038; or call 415/851-7813.

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