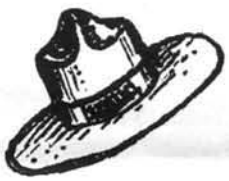
The **Ponderosa**

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

September 1997

From under My Brim

by Barry Breckling



A Very Pleasant Place

It was a cold snowy January day in California's Inner Coast Ranges. Scrub Jay was perched near the middle of a ponderosa pine, his feet tucked under his feather-fluffed belly, the half rain, half snow half sticking to his back. His head was scrunched down into his neck, and he raised it only slightly at the sound of a coyote howling far across the canyon.

Some people might think that a bird's face can't reveal its emotions, but this bird's face showed definite signs of boredom and disgust. He wasn't at all pleased with the weird weather. He didn't want to spend the day hunched up in his feathers, trying to stay dry. He'd much rather be out and about, looking for food and getting into mischief.

Scrub Jay was facing south, the direction from which the winter weather was blowing. The stormy winds flowed harmlessly around his aerodynamic body, and he could sleep out the storm in relative comfort, if need be.

Suddenly, he jerked up tall and skinny and looked to the east where he saw a gray form flying in his direction. This was a new bird to the jay, not unlike himself in form, but appearing a little bit better fed. Although jay-like in many ways, this odd bird lacked even the slightest hint of blue. It's body was gray, its wings were black, and the back of its wings and the outsides of its tail feathers, where a tinge of blue might have resided, were trimmed simply in white.

The strange bird landed in the jay's tree, not three feet from him. She shook from beak to tail, sending in all directions the little rain and snow that had been able to stick to her well-oiled feathers. Scrub Jay recovered his poise and said, "Jeeurrreeeeep," which roughly translated would come out something like, "What in the heck kind of bird are you, and where in the world did you come from?"

The bird answered, "I'm Clark's Nutcracker. I came down from the high rocky Sierra Nevada on a short vacation, just to get out of this winter's heavy snows for a while. You have a very pleasant place here, by the way."

Scrub Jay, taken aback a bit, said, "Well, yes, this is a rather fine place . . . when there's less rain, that is. And, well, this snow is rather uncommon and uncomfortable. I have heard of your home high in the rocky Sierra Nevada. My black-crested cousins, the Steller's Jays, have told me much about it. Their

Inside this issue . . .

An explanation of where springs come from

A guided tour of the Forest Trail

An introduction to the Spring Maintenance Committee

Calendar of upcoming events

. . . and more!

recycled paper

ancestors have lived well up into those mountains for years and years. I've often thought of traveling there myself and maybe making it my home."

Nutcracker replied, "If you find this little bit of snow uncomfortable, those mountains would not be a good home for you. I love the snow, except when it is very heavy. I live among the high rocky crags, in the land of vertical cliffs and vast treeless slopes. It is a most grand place, with views of snow-capped peaks on high and great green forests below. Marmot and Coyote can climb up into my mountains, but they cannot embrace them as I do. They cannot swoop down along the sheer granite cliffs, and they cannot perch up high on a mountain pine."

Scrub Jay felt himself drawn to the high, rocky landscapes, places of excitement and raw beauty. He said, "The high Sierra must be a most wonderful place."

Nutcracker replied, "Yes, it truly is, but your mountain place is very pleasant too, you know."

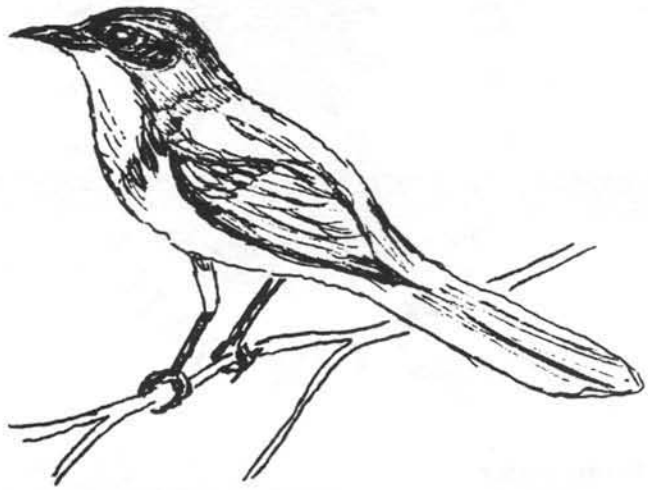
Scrub Jay reflected on his home for a moment or two. "Yes," he replied, "This place really is quite nice, and I do like living here, but I'm not quite sure what makes it so special to me. It seems rather tame compared to the marvels of your mountain tops."

All of a sudden, from the base of the tree, came a shrill bark that startled the birds. With a flurry of feathers, they flew several branches higher in the tall pine tree. They peered down and spotted Coyote, who they both knew well, and who was sometimes a friend and sometimes a foe. "I've been listening to you two squabble about your homes," said Coyote, "and I will tell you that the high mountains can be as harsh as they are wonderful. Some of my brothers have spent time in the high Sierras. They speak fondly of vast reaches and ruggedness, and they've lived very close to the unattainable peaks and sheer cliffs. But they cannot embrace the beauty of the high mountain peaks. They can only view the beauty from a distance.

"I am wiser than my brothers. I choose to live here in this marvelous place, a place that I love and warmly embrace, in these soft grassy fields with shady oak trees, where pine trees sway in a soft summer breeze. A place to find peace among wild spring flowers, a place that is cleansed by soft winter showers."

Coyote cocked his head and looked up at the birds. "I'd like to help you two settle your dispute," he said. "Why don't you come down here and sit beside me so we won't have to holler back and forth to each other?"

Scrub Jay and Nutcracker were charmed by Coyote's poetic words and were ready to descend the tree and join him when Scrub Jay suddenly remembered that he and Nutcracker hadn't been disagreeing at all. Scrub Jay realized what hungry Coyote was up to. He hollered down, "Juurrrp!" which roughly translated would come out something like, "Nice try, Coyote!"



Water, Water, Everywhere

by Phil Frame

Ahh summer time. When a young park visitor's fancy turns towards springs.

Those of us venturing into the backcountry in the summer or fall know we need to set up camp near a water supply: a perennial stream, a reservoir, or a spring. In the first two instances we are restricted to topographic depressions. Using our basic knowledge of the laws of gravity, we can pretty well guess why streams flow in the bottoms of canyons and why water stops behind dams. But springs occur almost anywhere in the park, other than mountain tops. Why are springs located where they are (and why aren't there more, anyway)?

Plants and most animals see springs as a life source in an otherwise arid environment. Specialized communities of plants [hydrophilic] develop at springs, and creatures, both permanent and transitory, rely on the water for sustenance.

There are, of course, those who see this giver-of-life differently. A geologist, for example, might attempt to borrow the mathematician's respect, claiming the spring is the intersection of the ground-water table with the earth's surface. Or the geologist might define it as a point where ground water becomes surface water. Really now! That coming from a pro

who argues about the correct spelling of "ground-water" (one word, two words, or hyphenated). [I will conform with the U.S. Geological Survey's somewhat inconsistent standard of two words unless used as a compound modifier, therefore this is an article on **ground water** or a **ground-water** article.]

So as we fill our water bottle from this spring, let us ponder this resource with the inanimate view of a geologist. We know our spring water was ground water just moments before it sprung, so we need a basic idea of water within the earth to begin with. Most of this knowledge comes from drilling holes in the ground, examining the materials encountered, checking to see if we have hit any water, what level it is at, and how fast can we pump it out. If we were to drill a well, say at Mt. Sizer, the uppermost few feet of soil would be dry. Below this depth, the soil would become moist, and the underlying rock would be damp. (This portion of the ground where water occurs as a gas rather than a liquid is called the vados zone.) Eventually the drillhole would penetrate rock that is saturated with water, and if we stop drilling, the well will slowly fill to some depth that will be the ground-water level at that location and at that particular time.

If Ranger Barry Breckling would allow us and if we had scads of money, we could drill additional wells on Blue Ridge, plot the water levels on a map, and draw a ground-water level contour diagram. Based on this type of study done elsewhere in the Diablo Range, we would expect the ground-water contours to mimic the surface topography but be smoother and probably lie 20 to 30 feet below the surface.

Since gravity is tugging away on ground water just as it does on surface water, we know water will flow from a higher elevation toward a lower one. The velocity of water in a stream depends on the steepness (gradient) of the channel. The velocity of ground water also depends on differences in elevation but more importantly on the character of the material it is passing through. Gravel, for example, will transmit water very rapidly, but as grain size decreases, so does the material's ability to transmit water. A clay, on the other hand, will allow water to move only very slowly. The permeability (technically, hydraulic conductivity) of an earth material is the velocity of water passing through it, which is generally slower than a sprinting snail. Typical permeability values in feet per day are:

Stream gravel	100 to 100,000
Fractured rock	0.001 to 10
Sandstone	0.0001 to 0.001
Shale	0.00000001 to 0.0001

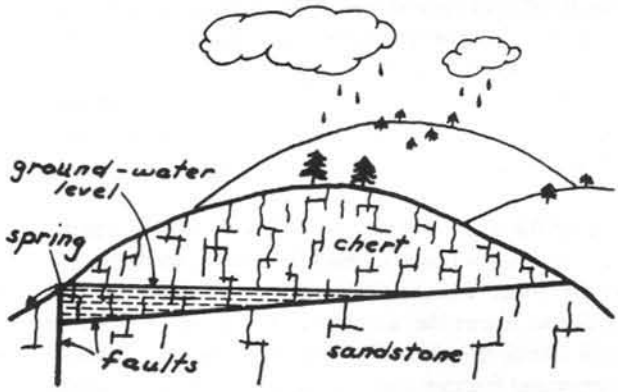
Saturated materials of high permeability are called aquifers; low permeability materials are called (are you ready?) aquatards, or if we are talking really low, aquacludes. In the Santa Clara Valley where layers of sand and gravel are separated by clays and silt, wells pump large quantities of water from the course-grained aquifers, and if more (or cleaner) water is needed, the well could be extended through the underlying pesky aquatard and into a deeper aquifer. Our imaginary well on Mt Sizer, though, would penetrate sandstone, which has most of the spaces between grains filled with mineral deposits rather than water and consequently has very low permeability. In this type of rock, ground water is concentrated in a network of open cracks and is referred to as a fractured-rock aquifer. If our well encounters an extensive, wide fracture or fracture zone, we could perhaps pump lots of water. In the more likely event that fractures are minuscule, the water level in the well would be the same, but we could easily pump the well dry because flow would be so low.

Most of the ground water at Coe is carried in bedrock aquifers. A tiny bit flows in the alluvium beneath the rocky surface of stream channels, emerging only where bedrock is exposed and forces the water into pools such as China Hole or Upper Camp. Since drilling a well and hoping to encounter an underground fracture zone permeable enough to produce water is an expensive and fortuitous proposition, we let nature do the work and venture to a location where a fracture zone comes to the earth's surface—our spring.

Springs, therefore, usually develop where fracture zones intersect the ground surface and are underlain or impeded by low permeability materials. A portion of the rain falling on the ground surface will seep downward, eventually finding its way into the ground-water reservoir. The reservoir is dynamic, and the water trickles down-gradient through fractures until it is impeded by a low permeability zone. The water will build up on this zone and, if it is extensive, will reach the ground surface as a spring.

By putting these concepts together, we could try to explain the occurrence of springs on Pine Ridge. Checking your handy dandy map of this area, you will notice springs aligned along the southwest side of this ridge, including Willow Tree Spring on the north, Headquarters Spring, several springs along the aptly named Springs Trail, and Rabbit Spring at the south. This ridge top is mostly underlain by chert with sandstone lying on either side. Faults form the contact between these formations. Faults often create ground-water barriers because tectonic movement has ground the adjacent rock into an impermeable clayey gouge.

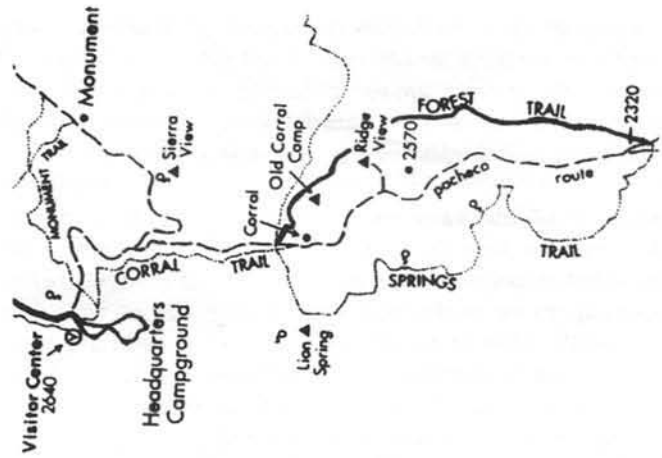
In theory, rain falling on the ridge soaks into the ground, filling fractures in the chert. This underground reservoir is confined by the faults and fills to a level where leaking occurs at more permeable low spots on the faulted chert/sandstone contact. Ground water slowly flowing through the fractures a few feet each day keeps the reservoir filled. We fill our canteen, drink the cool water, marvel at the sights and sounds above ground, and think no more of the water beneath our feet.



The Forest Trail

by Winslow Briggs

As you leave the road to the left about three-quarters of a mile from the visitor center to Manzanita Point, you are faced immediately with a trio of trails before you. To the left is the Flat Frog Trail, completed in 1996; straight ahead is the Fish Trail; and to the right is the Forest Trail, completing the trident. Also relatively new like the Springs Trail, it provides a beautiful alternative out Pine Ridge to the Manzanita Point Road. Unlike the Springs Trail, however, it remains in the forest for virtually its entire length, confirming the validity of its name. It provides the visitor with another special service besides offering a cool and inviting path on a hot summer day: a PRA volunteer, Stew Eastman, has developed it as a nature trail. Booklets available at the start provide a guide to various plants to be encountered ahead, and numbered posts correspond to numbered descriptions in the booklets. Finally, for the visitor hiking up from Poverty Flat, its gentle grade is a welcome relief after the steep final switchbacks of the Poverty Flat Road (and the other two outrageously steep sections!)—indeed it is the recommended route back to the visitor center, avoiding the brutally steep continuation of the road.



After a few yards of open meadow, the trail plunges with conviction into the forest—here largely blue oaks (*Quercus douglasii*)—beginning what is mostly a very gradual 1.1-mile descent. Almost immediately the trail crosses a draw in a sharp left turn. Look up the draw for a fine view of Sada's Pine, a landmark ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) named for Sada Coe, Henry Coe's daughter. The tree presents an especially imposing profile through the slender oaks. Soon the forest becomes quite a mixture, with blue oak, valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), bay (*Umbellularia californica*), big-berry manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glauca*), and an occasional gray pine (*Pinus sabiniana*). There is even an occasional coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*). A gradual curve to the right leads past two more tree species, the California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) and black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) with its shiny green leaves the margins of which exhibit sharply pointed lobes. Unlike the forest exclusively of live oak near the start of the Springs Trail, where the light level is so low that few other plants can survive (and compounds leached out of the fallen live oak leaves almost certainly inhibit the germination of seeds of other species), this forest is a riot of color from wildflowers in the spring. In March 1997, it provided a wonderful display of brilliant yellow buttercups (*Ranunculus californicus*). Look across the canyon to the right, and you should be able to spot the Flat Frog Trail at about the same elevation as the Forest Trail.

The woods deepen for a bit as you continue a gradual downgrade, crossing a slope that drops away by at least 40° to the left. Keep an eye out for occasional tantalizing glimpses of Blue Ridge. Soon you enter another draw, turning out of it sharply to the left, and passing into a forest largely composed of spindly blue oaks. They look about the same age, and one wonders whether they all germinated within a single favorable period—perhaps even a single year. As you leave the blue oaks, watch for a cluster of pines—both ponderosa and gray together, and a lot of very dead manzanita. The trail drops

gently to the right, continuing the modest down-grade, and enters a somewhat denser forest of shorter trees. Watch for windows out to the left: they provide a breath-taking contrast to the intimacy of the forest that surrounds you.

The trail enters another draw, once again turning sharply out of it to the left. Look for an odd-shaped tree trunk just above you. A curious barrel tapers up and then pinches in to the normal cylindrical trunk of a madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*). It is anybody's guess why the tree did that odd thing. It could be the work of a parasitic fungus, but that is not the only possibility. Maybe the tree just went berserk in its youth before recovering its senses and growing normally. You can still get glimpses of the Flat Frog Trail across the immediate canyon, with Blue Ridge dominating the far horizon to the right.

A turn around some rocks on your right heads you into a side canyon and, for the Forest Trail, a rare fifteen-yard stretch with open meadow sloping away below you. The crests of Blue Ridge above and Middle Ridge below form two wavy, almost parallel lines—both ridges have almost exactly the same silhouette. Climbing slightly, the trail re-enters the forest, and rounds the end of the side canyon. The canyon consists here of a couple of draws that join somewhat below the trail. Above you in the second draw is an elegant mossy rock garden. The descent resumes, and a few yards farther you come upon a passageway into a fascinating rock formation to your right. This gateway is obviously irresistible, as there is a well worn pathway into it. If you yield to the temptation, you'll almost immediately reach the end of the passageway, doubling the wear on the pathway as you retreat back to the main trail.

The trail passes below the rocks, climbs slightly, and heads out onto a spur ridge with a great yawning valley directly ahead. You shortly swing just short of 180° to the right with a two-trunked madrone (smooth light tan bark) and a many-trunked manzanita (smooth purple-brown bark) just at the apex of the turn. Soon there is another window, this one opening further to the south, revealing the high point on Willow Ridge, with some distant peaks visible to the left of it. The trail follows a slightly descending sinuous course through the mixed forest across a broad face of Pine Ridge, with a fair number of open windows to the left. Watch for an odd four-trunked bay tree on your right. After several hundred yards, you encounter another level stretch across yet another draw. A sharp left turn brings you into a tangled mixture of madrone and manzanita, with a few small ponderosa pines thrown in for good measure. You wind your way through this rather different forest for about a hundred yards, and come suddenly upon what must be the mother (father? grandparent?) of all madrones. It consists of six massive trunks plus one massive side branch. One of the trunks is completely dead, and the others don't look entirely healthy. This magnificent specimen is clearly coming close to the end of its normal life span, but it has most certainly had a long and productive career making prodigious quantities of madrone wood.

You are almost at the end of the madrone/manzanita/ponderosa forest as the trail passes to the right of three slender ponderosas. The descending traverse continues, with a few smaller windows providing fascinating vignettes of the two great ridges to the northeast of you. Another draw is distinguished by a log with a step cut out of it, and the trail then continues to follow the undulating contour of the flank of the Pine Ridge. Watch for an unusually large gray pine to your left. The forest becomes a bit more open, especially above. A mini-forest of gray pines and a spectacular manzanita to your left brings you back amongst blue oaks with scattered manzanita and an occasional bay tree. A brushy spot (the first along the trail—there is even some fragrant sagebrush, although you are hardly in real chaparral) provides a larger window, and shortly beyond is a welcome bench. Here you can sit and look through the dangling branches of an overhanging black oak at Middle Ridge and Blue Ridge. The two ridges still have almost parallel profiles.

As you continue, the crest of Pine Ridge drops ever closer, coming in from your right, and a large black oak trunk on your left marks the boundary of the forest. The trail ends as it started, through open meadow, as it curves right to join first the Poverty Flat Road and then a few yards farther the Manzanita Point Road just beyond where the two diverge from each other. Cross the little patch of meadow between them, and you will be facing the end of the Springs Trail. A left turn on the Poverty Flat Road will take you (surprise) to Poverty Flat; a left turn on the Manzanita Point road will take you to (surprise) Manzanita Point; continuation straight ahead on the Springs Trail will take you (surprise) past (or at least near) four springs; and a right turn on the Poverty Flat Road will return you to the visitor center.

I Hear Everything
I Hear Nothing
I Hear What Makes No Sound
by Millicent Kellogg

meditations on a dry grassy knoll . . .

I hear asters sprouting blue petals from yellow circles
oak leaves toasting on a sprig grill
trees designing another ring for their centerpieces

I hear moles complaining they cannot blink
gophers doing sums to assess the damage
mockingbird eggs cheeping twenty-two variations on *chirp*

I hear iron rusting on abandoned railroad cars
rocks stirring to wicked rhythms and dirty dancing
footpaths wearing to smooth indelible scars
lights waiting to be turned on in a classroom

I hear *Tyrannosaurus rex* roaring disapproval of obsolescence
sperm and eggs colliding in spongy hallways
cancer cells dividing for their own *veni, vidi, vici* campaign
hearts being riven while trusting they are loved

I hear ants planning a Thanksgiving dinner raid
I hear snow etching each filigree original
I hear eternity making course corrections in time and light
I hear footfalls of souls capriciously entering and leaving the earth.

Juan Bautista de Anza
by Celia McCormack

It was two hundred one years ago, March 1776, that Juan Bautista de Anza made claim to land in California for Spain. The land he claimed is present day Fort Point, San Francisco. Shortly after his claim, he and eight soldiers set out to explore a route around San Francisco Bay and the Delta to the "other side." This exploratory trip led Anza and his men through regions of the current city of Livermore, the San Antonio Valley, East Fork of the Coyote Creek, and on to Monterey Bay.

On April 26, 1997, we joined Juan Bautista de Anza (role played by Don Garate, guest speaker at the Coe Backcountry Weekend on the history and route of Anza and his explorers). We hiked the new Anza Trail, revisiting the sights mentioned in the journal writings of Pedro Font, a Franciscan missionary chosen for the trip. We discussed the journal and pointed out landmarks still visible today.

Anza made his way south via Livermore through the San Antonio Valley. It was there he saw the gypsum while looking for cinnabar in the red-soiled hills. You can still see the large, white gypsum scrapes on the mountains north of the park. Some people mistakenly think they are seeing snow on the hillside. The route continues south along Coyote Creek to the campsite at Los Cruzeros. The journal mentions the difficulty of navigating the rocks and boulders.

It was a fantastic day spent with Don, who is a U.S. Department of the Interior historian. His experiences researching Anza are fascinating. His research includes translating letters and documents written in old Spanish, traveling to the Basque regions of Spain, and visiting the archives, villages, and relatives of Anza. Don shared that there has been misinformation regarding the purpose and activities of the Spaniards. History can often get misconstrued if there are only fragments of information shared. His extensive research of documents, letters, and diaries revealed that Anza was revered by the people. His leadership was valued. He was cautious, experienced, and responsible to all who traveled with him.

Next time you are in the area of the National Park Service-funded Anza Trail, hike along the trail, enjoy the vistas, and think back two hundred one years ago—picture Anza and his followers traveling through the same soil, terrain, and water shed.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Park News
by Kay Robinson
Park Superintendent

September has started off in grand fashion. I actually had the holiday off and enjoyed boating on Elkhorn Slough in my new kayak (delighted to "bump into" friends and Coe Park volunteers Celia McCormack and Ruby Domino there). And on Tuesday, the 2nd, I was honored as a recipient of the Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Month award. All the devious and secret planning of the Pine Ridge Association Board of Directors, spearheaded by Dennis Pinion, paid off. I was caught totally by surprise. It is such an honor to be recognized by one's peers for work that I truly love. Yes, I do "volunteer" some extra time, but, you must agree, that it is for a good cause. The future of Coe State Park is bright. My work for the public and the park is full of variety, excitement, challenges, satisfaction, and camaraderie with staff and volunteers. Thank you again for your constant show of support.

One of those causes of satisfaction and excitement is a new turn of events with the State budget. Included in the approved budget for fiscal year 1997–1998 were funds to exercise the lease purchase option on the remaining 538 acres of Don Silacci's Hunting Hollow. This will eliminate an "inholding," provide greater recreational opportunities in the form of more loop trails out of "The Hollow," open up the entire Braen Canyon area to exploration and visitor use, and eliminate the need to reroute the base of Lyman Willson Ridge Road.

The opening of Hunting Hollow to the public is dependent upon environmental review of the impact of the minimal development that is planned. Once the report has been reviewed and, hopefully, approved, we will proceed with our plans: open up the first meadow on a year-round basis to public parking, install fencing (to limit vehicles to the first meadow when the creek is running) and gates (to allow authorized vehicle access and walk- and ride-through accessibility to visitors), install trash cans, chemical toilets, a few picnic tables, a self-registration station, and informational and interpretive bulletin boards. It was our hope to get this done by the end of summer, but the review is taking a little longer than expected.

Good news with the new sign program for the park. The redesigned sign program (destination-based, not next-intersection-based) is coming to fruition, and the new signs should start arriving by early November. It was such a large order (well, Coe is such a large park!) that the ten suborders will take about ten weeks to arrive. I will be looking for volunteer crews of three people each to help park staff install these signs. You do not have to be an already-signed-up volunteer to participate. If you have a love of the park and want to help out, we welcome your assistance. There are 176 signed junctions in the park. How many of them have you seen? This would be a great opportunity to get out into the backcountry the easy way and help us accomplish something at the same time. Call me at 408/848-4008 to offer your services. See you at the Fall Barbecue, perhaps!

Spring Maintenance Committee
by Ruby Domino

Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink. The Indians found the springs at Coe Park, the cattle ranchers developed them, and the Spring Maintenance Committee is repairing and maintaining them. The purpose of the spring committee is to improve the water catchment facilities at the numerous springs. This improvement will greatly enhance wildlife habitat and increase visitor safety.

Spring maintenance is not particular to Henry W. Coe State Park. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and other state parks have volunteer support and funding for the maintenance and development of springs. One of the major providers of funds is The Mule Deer Foundation (MDF). The late John Leonti, a MDF member and park neighbor, and Santa Clara County Fish and Game warden Henry Coletto were instrumental in supporting the spring projects in Coe. We have had tremendous support and help from park staff: Doug Meyers, Ric Carpenter, Rick Perez, Barry Breckling, Lee Dittmann, and Kay Robinson.

During the past three years, an average of over 1,700 hours have been donated annually, resulting in the following accomplishments: construction of eleven redwood spring boxes, placement of twenty new water troughs and two large storage tanks, and repair and replacement of many feet of PVC pipe. After all this is in place, the springs need to be monitored on a regular basis. This year the spring committee has been researching and taking inventory of the springs located on the Redfern Ranch and Hunting Hollow—two new acquisitions.

The next time you are in the park and visit a spring, replace a critter-stick, check the outflow and inflow pipes, clean the trough, and mostly enjoy the many animal tracks found at the spring sites. Become familiar with the springs so that you can contribute to ensure a water supply to animals and visitors.

Your spring knowledge will help lost and tired park visitors in the backcountry.

If this type of activity sounds interesting to you, join the spring committee. Our work weekends begin at the Gilroy Hot Springs-Coyote Creek gate, where we meet and "vehicle pool" to Pacheco Camp, which is the base camp for the weekend. After setting up camp, we head out in 4-wheel drive vehicles to the first designated worksite. Work includes building spring boxes, digging trenches, clearing brush, and installing and repairing troughs, storage tanks, and PVC pipe. Since the pig population has grown and become widespread throughout the park, we have major problems at the springs. Please report any damage you discover at a spring site. The pigs uproot the pipes and even overturn troughs.

Beside the work, volunteers get the benefit of spending time in the back regions of the park, which are otherwise difficult to access in a short weekend without a vehicle. Not only is there an opportunity to see the park's beautiful scenery but also to see some of the wildlife we are working so hard to provide with water. Along with this, the volunteers get the chance to take a dip in the swimming holes and to fish the beautiful lakes before returning to camp to enjoy an evening barbecue. Campfire entertainment is very special, with live music and laughter provided by Ric and Ranger Doug. Sunday morning projects are finished and the volunteers depart, looking forward to the next spring maintenance outing. Wonderful friendships are a complement to a satisfying weekend providing a great service to Coe Park. Through these efforts, more people can enjoy the beauty of the park during the dry months.

We want to thank you for your patience and understanding when we are out on the spring maintenance work weekends in the backcountry. These events occur four or five times a year and are opportunities to get a tremendous amount of work accomplished in a short amount of time with lots of manpower from an absolutely great group of volunteers.

If you can help with spring maintenance and don't mind getting dirty, wet, and muddy—come join! Contact one of the following committee members: Ruby Domino (408/779-4664), Celia McCormack (408/847-7921), or Richard Auser (408/847-0404). We would love to share our **special** and **fun** park excursions with you! Volunteering is a way to provide a public service and to fulfill responsibilities to society. Volunteering can provide opportunities for learning and valuable experience for future careers. It can also be an outlet for creativity and energy. As a volunteer, you provide a valuable service to the park staff, to the park district, to the Department of Parks and Recreation, and especially to the visitors who come to the park. All volunteer efforts are greatly appreciated and very rewarding.

Purpose of the Spring Maintenance Committee: The spring committee is formed to advise the Four Rivers District Superintendent on the status and conditions of springs in Henry W. Coe State Park and to suggest priorities for development and maintenance. The Spring Maintenance Committee Chair will serve as the district volunteer project coordinator for spring work projects.

Goals and Objectives:

Locate and map existing springs

Record status and flow of existing springs

Suggest priorities for spring maintenance and development with park staff to ensure adequate supply of water for wildlife and visitors

Plan, organize, and lead work parties

A Fond Farewell
by Barry Breckling

Long-time neighbor and friend of the park, Leon Thomas, passed away on September 6. Leon was born in Morgan Hill in 1909 and spent many of his early years in the mountains adjacent to the Coe Ranch. Leon worked throughout the country for the U.S. Forest Service, ending up as a special staff assistant in Washington, D.C. After he retired in 1968, Leon returned to Morgan Hill and became involved with local history. He was one of the founders and one-time president of the Morgan Hill Historical Society

Leon was also one of the founders of the Pine Ridge Association, and on June 23, 1975, he hosted the first meeting of the PRA Board of Directors at his home. Leon served as a board member from 1975 until 1979 and was chairperson for part of that time. He also gave evening programs at the park on the park area history and homesteaders. Leon provided inspiration and wise counsel to the small group of people who found a common purpose in preserving Coe's natural and historical heritage.

We will dearly miss our good friend and neighbor.

Membership Survey Results
Part 2: Guided Walks; *The Ponderosa*
by Lee Dittmann

In a previous issue of *The Ponderosa,* we presented the results from the first part of our membership survey sent out at the end of last year. That issue covered **Organization Priorities**. This article focuses on the results of questions concerning two types of activities we sponsor: Guided walks/hikes and this newsletter, *The Ponderosa*, itself. There were 135 responses tabulated.

Do you enjoy attending guided walks or hikes?

We counted **99** *saying* **Yes** *and* **17 No**. *A few people indicated that they like to hike but don't like group hikes or walks.*

Of those who liked guided walks or hikes, the types preferred were as follows:

Wildflower walks—82
General nature walks—72
Bird walks—57
Reptile & amphibian walks—39
Tarantula walks—38
Overnight trips for intermediate to advanced—37
Overnight backpack trips for beginners—23
Walks suitable for small children—22

Note that these numbers add up to much more than 99, since people could choose more than one type of walk. In addition, space was available for suggesting these other kinds of guided outings: geology [two mentions]; from Bell Station; trees and plants; mounted; bike tours; astronomy; "fragrance-free" [no perfume on participants to distract from natural scents?]; discovery; and moonlight on Burra Burra.

What length do you prefer guided walks or hikes to be?

In descending order of preference, these are the results:

2 to 5 miles—60
5 to 10 miles—32
1 to 2 miles—29
10 to 15 miles—13
15 to 20 miles—9
Over 20 miles—9
Less than 1 mile—8

Since the majority of the walks we currently offer are in the 1- to 2-mile range, the results seem to indicate that we should offer more walks over two miles.

The Ponderosa

Select the statement that best describes how much you read *The Ponderosa:*

I read every issue cover to cover—70
I read most of most issues but skim over some parts—39
I read about half of each issue, sometimes more, sometimes less—11
I read only one or two articles or features each issue—4
I rarely or never read any part of it—1

This result shouldn't be too surprising, since those who take the time to read and complete a survey form are more likely to be thorough readers!

On which of the following subjects would you like to see articles in future issues of *The Ponderosa*?
Rate them: 1 = Yes! I *love* this subject! 2 = This subject interests me a lot. 3 = This subject is mildly interesting to me. 4 = I don't like this subject.

This section can be analyzed in many ways. We'll try two. First, a look at the top 7 subjects getting the most 1s. In descending order:

Special places in Coe—68
Calendar of events—67

Park ecology—63
Ranger stories—62
Mammals—56
Backpacking—56
Day hiking—52
Native American history—50

Now we look at the average rating of each category, in descending order, with the tabulation of "votes" following in parentheses. The lower the average rating, the more people enjoyed the subject. For example, "Special places in Coe" received an average rating of 1.44, which could be described as almost *loving this subject. Specifically, "Special places" received 68 marks in the "1" rating, 35 marks in the "2" rating, and so forth. Notice how similar the top of this list looks to the one above.*

Special places in Coe—1.44 (1-68, 2-35, 3-7, 4-0)
Calendar of events—1.46 (1-67, 2-32, 3-9, 4-0)
Park ecology—1.56 (1-63, 2-34, 3-11, 4-2)
Mammals—1.57 (1-56, 2-47, 3-8, 4-0)
Ranger stories—1.58 (1-62, 2-36, 3-15, 4-0)
Day hiking—1.67 (1-52, 2-43, 3-12, 4-2)
Backpacking—1.68 (1-56, 2-32, 3-19, 4-1)
Wildflowers—1.72 (1-48, 2-49, 3-13, 4-2)
Native American history—1.75 (1-50, 2-39, 3-15, 4-4)
Birds—1.76 (1-44, 2-47, 3-18, 4-0)
Park history—1.77 (1-44, 2-51, 3-18, 4-0)
Trail descriptions—1.77 (1-46, 2-43, 3-19, 4-1)
Trees and shrubs—1.77 (1-42, 2-54, 3-14, 4-1)
Ranch history—1.80 (1-44, 2-47, 3-18, 4-2)
Personal accounts of park activities—1.92 (1-41, 2-31, 3-27, 4-3)
Reptiles and amphibians—1.96 (1-36, 2-47, 3-21, 4-4)
Rocks and geology—1.99 (1-28, 2-57, 3-17, 4-5)
Volunteer activities—2.03 (1-27, 2-48, 3-28, 4-1)
Fish and other aquatic life—2.07 (1-26, 2-46, 3-25, 4-4)
Spiders and insects—2.15 (1-28, 2-42, 3-34, 4-5)
Weather and climate—2.16 (1-21, 2-46, 3-29, 4-4)
Park staff—2.31 (1-15, 2-42, 3-38, 4-4)
Hazards and safety—2.37 (1-21, 2-30, 3-42, 4-8)
Facility improvements and changes—2.39 (1-13, 2-43, 3-41, 4-6)
Photography tips—2.41 (1-14, 2-32, 3-41, 4-14)
Fundraising progress—2.47 (1-14, 2-33, 3-46, 4-8)
Membership news—2.56 (1-12, 2-29, 3-53, 4-8)
Fishing—2.59 (1-21, 2-24, 3-31, 4-25; *no other subject has as balanced a tally as this one!*)
Administration news—2.61 (1-10, 2-32, 3-44, 4-13)
Book reviews—2.74 (1-6, 2-29, 3-49, 4-15)
Car camping—2.76 (1-16, 2-20, 3-33, 4-29)
Mountain biking—2.82 (1-16, 2-20, 3-31, 4-34)
Horseback riding—2.83 (1-22, 2-11, 3-29, 4-38; *no other subject has such polarization of interest*)

These results should be taken with a grain of salt. Some subject names are ambiguous and might have gained higher (or lower) marks if they had been worded differently. If you aspire to writing for The Ponderosa, *you may wish to use this survey as inspiration; members have given a clear idea of the subjects that most interest them. Or you could take up the challenge of the best writers in the country—John McPhee comes to mind—which is to make interesting a story most readers would not expect to enjoy!*

Thanks to volunteers Mike Meyer, Barbara Gregory, Jim Gregory, and Phil Frame for assistance in compiling these sections of the survey. Look for further survey results in the next *Ponderosa*.

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.

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 other 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 14.** 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 the scarlet trumpets of California Fuchsia brighten the sunny summer hillsides, and as canyon creek waters grow green or disappear, we are pleased to welcome the new members listed below, who joined before September 12. Thank you all for your support and welcome to the Pine Ridge Association! The number of memberships in our organization now stands at 362.

Richard & Diane Auser, Gilroy
Lee Blanchard, Palo Alto
Renate & Robert Coombs, Oakland
Paul & Phyllis Dittman, Pioneer
William C. Jeffries, Jr., Gilroy
Debby Kline & family, Gilroy
Thomas M. Lister, Gilroy
Brian & Annette Neill, San Diego
Phil Nichols, Los Gatos
Carol & Jim Swartz, San Martin
Lynn D. Ulrich, Campbell
Craig & Barbara Ulrici, Fresno

Visitor Expansion Fund—New Contributors

Artists from the Gilroy Garlic Festival
Paul & Phyllis Dittman
Thomas M. Lister
Joseph G. Wirth

Special Contributions

In memory of **Leon Thomas**, a special contribution has been made by Mrs. Jessica A. Snyder.

Thanks to **Dennis Pinion** and **Barbara Radd** for another generous donation to match a portion of the profits from the visitor center's soft drink refrigerator.

PRA Calendar

Saturday, September 27: **Fall Barbecue and Tarantula Fest.** Join the fall barbecue at Coe Park. It is not too late to participate in the raffle that will be held during the afternoon. Proceeds will benefit the Visitor Center Expansion Fund. To obtain raffle tickets or to receive additional information, call the park headquarters (408/779-2728).

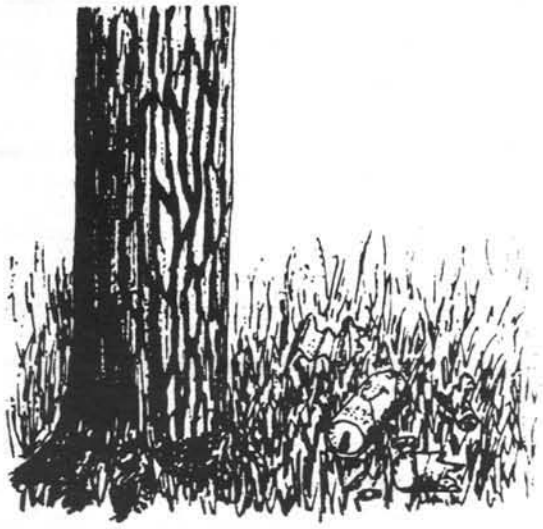
Saturday, October 18, & Sunday, October 19: **Barbed Wire Fest.** Join the annual barbed wire cleanup weekend. You can sign up to work either or both days and are welcome to camp overnight at Pacheco Camp. To sign up or to get more information, call Doug Meyers at the Sector Office (408/848-4006).

Saturday, November 8: **Trail Day.** Help build or improve a trail in the park. Volunteers will work from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Call Doug Meyers at the Sector Office to sign up or to receive additional information (408/848-4006).

Friday, November 14: **Deadline for mailing intent to run for the PRA Board of Directors.** See article on page 10 of the newsletter for more information.

Saturday, November 29: **Thanksgiving at Coe Park.** Celebrate Thanksgiving at Coe Park with a potluck dinner. Bring a dish and drinks to share; turkeys will be provided (for a nominal donation). For additional information or to sign up, call the park headquarters (408/779-2728).

Saturday, February 7, 1998: **Annual Meeting.** It is not too early to plan to attend the annual meeting of the Pine Ridge Association and the Coe Park Volunteers. More details will be provided at a later date.



Pine Ridge Association
Henry W. Coe State Park
P. O. Box 846
Morgan Hill, CA 95038
(408) 779-2728
http://www.garlic.com/coe

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

DATED MATERIAL, DO NOT DELAY

PRA Board of Directors

Kevin Gilmartin, Chair
David Perrin, Vice Chair
Stew Eastman, Volunteer Committee Chair
Owen Melroy, Secretary
Barbara Bessey
Thom Parks
Dennis Pinion
Libby Vincent

Barbara Radd, Treasurer
Kay Robinson, Park Superintendent

The Ponderosa Staff

Editors:	Kevin Gilmartin	Barbara Bessey
Assistant Editor:	Barry Breckling	
Mailing & Distribution:	Lee Dittmann Phyllis Drake	Roberta Wright
This Issue's Reporters:	Barry Breckling Winslow Briggs Lee Dittmann Ruby Domino	Phil Frame Millicent Kellogg Celia McCormack Kay Robinson
This Issue's Illustrators:	Barry Breckling Phil Frame	Judy Mason Kathy Paivinen

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 at 127 Glenwood Avenue, Woodside, CA 94062; or call 415/851-7813.

Copyright © 1997 The Pine Ridge Association