The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

Early Spring 2006

From under My Brim

by Barry Breckling

Umunhum

He ascended swiftly, head down, directly over a tall coyote brush shrub. Things below him appeared progressively smaller as he rose, but the object of his eye remained clearly in view. At about 100 feet up, he paused and then plummeted downward with all his might. As he neared the top of the coyote brush, he was diving at a little over 60 miles an hour, and just inches above the shrub, as he swung back up in an abrupt J-shaped arc, he made a loud booming "chirp." Moving several feet to the side, he hovered and let out a joyful, chortling rattle.

At the top of the shrub, sitting in rapt attention was the keen observer of his performance. She was small and, compared to him, somewhat drab. Just a little lump of green blending in with the vegetation. She was a female of his kind, and she was impressed with his flight and his brilliant colors, the iridescent red of his neck and head and the fluorescent green of his back and belly.

The people of the area had given him the name "umunhum." The name wasn't related to his impressive courtship display or to the beauty of his brightly colored feathers. It simply mimicked the sound his wings made when he flew or hovered, "umunhumunhumumunhumun." Later, other people would call him "hummingbird" for the same reason.

He was an Anna's hummingbird, in the prime of his life, and his attention was focused on a female who had entered his territory. After several more dives, replete with loud chirps and joyful chortling rattles, he started to dart from side to side inches above the female. His iridescent red head and neck feathers were expanded outwards, his tail feathers were spread wide, and his head with its long slender beak was pointed downwards toward the female. He followed her to her nest site, and they mated. Then he flew back to his territory.

The female had spent the previous week selecting a territory she preferred for its good nesting sites. The male had selected a territory with good food sources, lots of flowers. The female collected thistle down, small down feathers, and other soft materials and bound them together with pilfered spider webbing. She arranged the materials in the crotch of a small elderberry tree, about three feet above the ground. (The previous year she had nested 20 feet up in a blue oak tree.)

On the outside of the nest, she attached pieces of lichen and bark, which made the tiny nest nearly invisible. This year she laid two half-inch-long eggs (occasionally she would lay only one egg and on rare occasions she would lay three). She brooded the eggs for two weeks before they hatched. In

Inside this issue . . .

Why worry about endangered species?

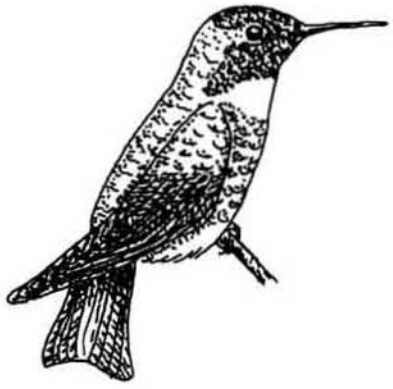
Precious moments at Redfern Pond

Simulating historic fire's role in the environment

New edition of the Coe Park map being printed

. . . and more!

another 18 days the little ones would become as large as their mother (about the weight of three dimes) and would begin to fly. During that time the female stayed busy, catching insects to feed to her young and regurgitating them with a little bit of nectar. Wildflowers would be in full bloom by the time the little ones were out of the nest, and there would be plenty of food for all the hummers.



In early spring, a few Allen's hummingbirds would fly through the area and sometimes linger as they migrated north. Later on, several Rufous hummingbirds would stop by on their way south in July and August.

Allen's and Rufous hummingbirds look quite similar, the females being almost indistinguishable. The males have a lot of iridescent orange-gold coloration on their bodies. Both species have green caps and wings. The Allen's always has a green back and the Rufous typically has an orange back (though up to five percent of Rufous hummingbirds have green backs, which can make it hard to tell the two species apart).

Both species seem to be faster and more agile than Anna's hummingbirds, but that might be due to the high buzzy trill that follows them around, making them sound like quick maneuvering, low flying jets.

The Anna's, Rufous, and Allen's are the most common hummingbirds in our area, but Black-Chinned and Calliope hummingbirds occasionally fly through. Add the Costa's Hummingbird of the desert and you have all the species found in California. Throughout the western hemisphere, there are over 300 species of hummingbirds, but they are mostly tropical dwellers. In Europe, Asia, and Africa there are no hummingbirds (and few red flowers).

As she was showing the two fledglings from her second brood how to sip nectar from a Columbine flower, an Allen's busted in and chased them off. She was patient and flew off only a short distance. She knew that the Allen's were always pushy, almost as pushy as Rufous hummingbirds would be later in the year. They were always in a big hurry to get somewhere, it seemed.

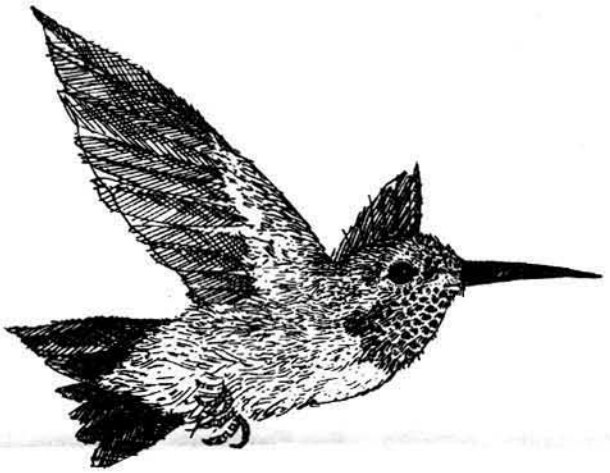
Like the Allen's and Rufous, some of her relatives would head south in the fall to winter in Mexico, but she stayed in the coastal mountains of Central California year around. How could she and the other Anna's that stayed survive after the spring bloom was over? She could actually find flowers every month of the year, but she would also eat many insects. As spring flowers faded, she would sneak sips of nectar from the holes that sapsuckers had made in trees and grab any insects caught in the sap. She would "hawk" for insects: Sitting on an outer branch of a tree, she'd dart out and catch small flying insects. She would fly around the edges of live oaks and pick off gnats, spiders, small larva, and even insect eggs. A favorite was mosquitoes. She could not survive without insects because they were her only source of protein, minerals, and vitamins.

In late summer, there would be a second blooming of flowers. The summer bloom was much less prolific than the spring bloom, but it would provide plenty of food for the Anna's. Then, by August, California Fuchsias, with their bright red flowers, would be easy to find on rocky slopes. Also called Hummingbird Trumpets, they would continue to bloom into the month of December. The Rufous Hummingbirds would take special interest in them during their southern migration through the mountains in the fall. By the time the California Fuchsias were almost gone, the Chaparral Currant would be out. Soon afterwards manzanitas would be booming in profusion, followed by late winter flowers like the maroon-red Indian Warriors. The summer, fall, and winter flowers would sustain her until the return of spring.

Although she often seemed partial to red, pink, and orange flowers, she would readily pass them by to sip from flowers of any color if they provided ample nectar. Red flowers with long nectar tubes had evolved, alongside hummingbirds, to attract her kind. They were designed so that only her kind could reach the nectar at the end of the tubes. As she fed from a nectar tube, pollen from the flower's anthers stuck to her head, and the pollen was deposited on the pistil of the next flower she visited. Each tubular red flower would deposit pollen on a different part of her head to ensure pollination of its kind. If you could see inside a Red Columbine while her

long bill was inserted into one of its tubes, you'd see her extend her even longer tongue into the nectar and repeatedly draw it back into her beak as she lapped up the nectar.

The male had mated with several females throughout the spring and had diligently defended his flower garden. When another male entered his territory, he would chatter persistently, moving his head from side to side. If that didn't work, he'd move to a location where the intruder was between him and the sun. Then he'd expand his feathers so the rays of the sun would show his colors to best advantage, and he'd increase the volume of his chatter. He'd also express his aggression by flying side to side and spreading his tail feathers wide. If none of those efforts discouraged his adversary, he'd physically assault the bird. Such assaults seldom led to blood or injury, but the one who backed down, whether the original defender of the territory or the trespasser, would end up in search of a new territory. If an adversary was sitting at the top of a nearby shrub or tree, the defender might resort to the dive display he used for courtship. He'd make the loud booming "chirp" just inches above the intruder's head, and he'd deliver the chortling rattle as he had with the female, but now his vocalizations sounded more like scolding. (People had believed that he made the booming chirp with his feathers, similar to the way Allen's and Rufous hummingbirds make the high trill with their wings, but it was discovered that Anna's hummingbirds actually vocalize their loud chirps.)



One of the male Anna's finest assets for attracting mates and for repelling trespassers is his bright red bib, which is called a "gorget." He also has matching feathers on the top of his head. These iridescent red gorget and head feathers produce a special kind of color that seems almost impossibly brilliant.

Most birds have pigmented feathers that reflect the color we see and absorb all other colors. Most of the feathers on hummingbirds also work that way, but the male's gorget and head feathers are different.

Each tiny part of an Anna's gorget or head feather has three layers: an outer, pigmented, translucent layer, a middle layer of very tiny air bubbles, and an inner reflective layer. When light hits the translucent outer layer, some of it is reflected in red wavelengths. Light that is not reflected by the outer layer passes through the air bubbles of the middle layer, is reflected by the inner layer, passes back out through the bubble layer, and then escapes through the outer layer. The air bubbles in the middle layer affect the light's wavelength. On the way in, the bubbles convert the light to a wavelength other than red; on the way out the bubbles convert the light to red wavelengths. The way the bubbles affect color may be similar to the way oil film and soap bubbles produce rainbow colors.

The two sources of red amplify and strengthen each other, producing an especially bright, iridescent red. The angle that the feathers are seen from affects their color. Into the sun, the feathers are bright red; away from the sun, they are black; and at an angle, they are shades of red.

He was a consummate flyer. Although smallest of the birds, he and his kind are the most agile flyers in the world. The muscles that power their wings make up 30 percent of their total body weight. He could use a figure-eight movement of his wings to hold still in the air as he fed on flower nectar, and he could fly forwards, backwards, up, down, sideways, and even upside down for a short time. In normal flight, his wings moved at 20 to 80 beats per second. In a dive display, they could beat over 200 times per second!

As fall turned to winter, he would fly over large areas looking for flowers. One afternoon the temperature dropped to below freezing and a chilling wind blew out of the northwest. He found refuge on a limb of a Canyon Live Oak on the protected east side of a ridge. The temperature kept dropping as night fell. With their high metabolism and small size, hummingbirds live on the brink of starvation. Their tiny crops hold only enough nectar to sustain them for a short time, and they have very little fat to burn when the nectar is gone. His fate was sealed.

The morning dawned bright and cool, a little warmer than the night before. As the sun warmed the Canyon Live Oak, out flew the little red-bibbed wonder. He had not died. He'd gone into a deep sleep called "torpor." His temperature the day before had varied between 104° and 111° Fahrenheit, and his heart had raced at about 250 beats per minute while he was resting and up to 1,250 beats per minute when he was feeding. In torpor, his temperature dropped to 55°, his heartbeat lowered to 50 beats per minute, and he burned very little energy.

His fate was sealed. He would be around for another spring of pollinating flowers, chasing others out of his territory, and doing unbelievable aerial acrobatics to impress the girls.

How to Love the Robust Spineflower

by Ken Hulick

Quaint names disguise some organisms (plant, animal, or somewhere in between) that may have inestimable value. The robust spineflower happens to be classified as an endangered species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and also is listed as rare or endangered by the California Native Plant Society. I would like to point out some of the reasons for preserving organisms such as this one, beyond merely complying with the law. Incidentally, it can be a good idea to comply with federal or state law because the penalties for violation of these acts can be a little stiff. (For purposes of this exercise, we are using "endangered" to include legally threatened or endangered, rare, of limited distribution, and populations of all of the above, that may be in danger of extinction.)

So why worry about endangered species? If they are almost gone and the earth is still spinning, they can't be very important, can they? The real answer is that we don't know enough about most of them to really know what role they play in a complex web of prey, predator, food, and other interactions ranging from symbiosis to commensalism. They produce oxygen, cycle hydrogen, store carbon, facilitate natural processes on which other organisms rely, and participate in a complicated pattern of evolution and co-evolution that will end up who-knows-where. With some ecosystems teetering on the brink of collapse, who knows how many more components of the system can be removed before the system does collapse.

Endangered species represent a largely untapped resource of educational or research value. Education of our society, wildlife viewing, basic research on how natural biotic systems work, applied research in areas that are little impacted by human activities, field trips for students of all ages, opportunities for individual nature study—all these represent ways that we can use our natural areas and the organisms in them as ways to enrich the lives of humans.

Hundreds of millions of visitors each year visit our wildlife viewing areas such as parks, marshes, forests, and deserts. They share one characteristic—they came to see plants and animals in a natural setting, not in a zoo. They value the experience and find it a positive experience that they love to share with others. Some of this viewing of wildlife is for esthetic appreciation, some as a part of eco-tourism that helps our balance of payments and recreation-based industry.

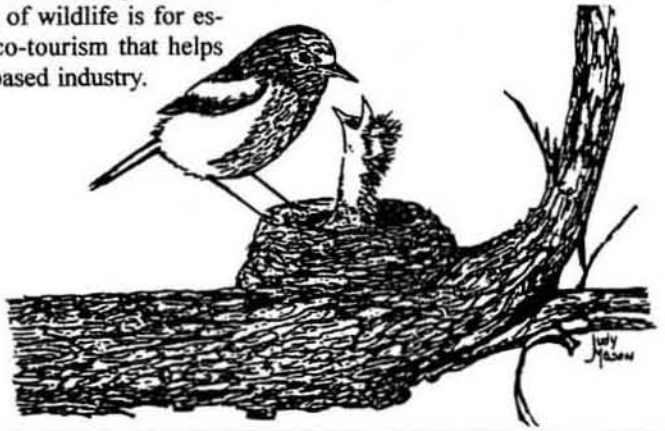
Rare plants and animals represent a potential bonanza for pharmaceutical companies. These companies are bargaining for the rights to survey tropical plants for compounds that might be useful as pesticides or medicines, and Yellowstone National Park is claiming ownership of hot pool genetic material that might be useful in the exploration of other worlds for different life forms. Since only 3% of all plants have been surveyed for useful organic chemicals, to lose any organism could represent a potential loss of tremendous value to humans. If we lose just one organism that could contribute to human health, we lose the option of ever benefitting from what that organism has to teach us.

And how about the "tinker factor"? If you believe, as I do, that the first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces, then how can we ever hope to have fully functioning ecosystems if they are missing some important parts? This represents a very practical aspect of endangered species management—we might need them in the future to restore damaged ecosystems.

A moral argument can be made as to whether we have the right to cause, or allow, the extinction of a unique organism that might have evolved over millions of years. Aren't we exhibiting excess hubris when we make choices affecting the survival of other species? How would we feel if the robust spineflower had the potential to cause **our** extinction? Genetic resources are irreplaceable with today's technology, in spite of what we see in the Jurassic Park movies.

Economists use the term "bequest value" to describe the value of something that is passed on to our heirs. This intangible value is tough to quantify, or even to describe. Perhaps a few rhetorical questions will describe it. Are you proud of your life accomplishments related to endangered species? Would your grandchildren be proud of what you did for preserving endangered species? Did our society leave the earth in at least as good a condition as we found it?

Think of the robust spineflower as a surrogate for all the species of limited distribution in the world. Treat it as carefully as you would your great-grandmother's favorite cut-glass bowl. Care for it as if it represented everything good, long-lasting, and valuable in our society.



A Springtime Ramble
by Ron Erskine

It was the final evening of a five-day ramble through Henry Coe State Park. I had claimed an oak-studded knoll overlooking Redfern Pond as my home for the night. My sleeping bag unfurled and food hung in one of the oaks out of the reach of inquisitive critters, I now reclined in my camp chair alternating attention between my book and the coming dusk.

I watched the northern sky with growing interest. The scattered high cirrus clouds I had noticed earlier were beginning to coalesce into a threatening gloom. The wind was steadily building. Then, in a distinct instant, in a moment of focused attention that undistracted time in nature allows, I watched the wind riffles on the pond, which had been drifting toward me out of the north, turn 180 degrees pushed by a just-born southerly wind.

Uh-oh. Wind from the south. Threatening clouds to the north. I'm no meteorologist, but that means a low-pressure system is headed this way. Is it going to rain? The predictions were for fair weather before I left.

I dropped my book and headed for higher ground and a better look. I retraced my steps to a high grassy knob I had passed coming into camp earlier that day. Once there, I had a sweeping panorama of the interior of Coe Park to the east, Hollister's valley and hills to the south, and Gilroy and Mt. Madonna to the west. This meteorological turmoil ahead of the coming storm had driven every particle of grime from the air, revealing a crystalline view all the way to a clear distant horizon. The sky was a virtual cloud encyclopedia; fluffy cumulus clouds mixed with an infinite variety of saucer-shaped wind-stretched stratus clouds made the sky appear to be filled with an armada of flying saucers. The low sun streaked through occasional cloud openings to striking effect like some overly dramatized Albert Bierstadt painting. The hills, the valleys, the green, the clarity, the light. I turned and reeled in dumfounded rapture like a five-year-old on his first visit to Disneyland.

I saw one other thing. Dark rain clouds up north, approaching.

Back to camp. I set up the tent. Weather permitting, I never sleep in a tent, preferring to sleep under the stars. But I always carry one just in case. This looked to be one of those cases.

No rain yet, but let it come. I am ready for it. Back in my chair overlooking the pond, I witnessed another distinct instant that we miss in our hyperactive and distracted lives. Scattered concentric ringlets reflected the setting sunlight off the pond's surface—a feature I connect with rising feeding fish at this time of day. I was confused. There are probably bass in this pond, but do they rise like Sierra trout? No sooner had I asked the question than pit-pat-pit-pat, the first drops of rain fell on the sleeping bag draped over my legs. Those ringlets on the lake were the first drops of the coming storm.

I spent that rainy night in the confining comfort of my tent rehashing my trip. For five days I had been all alone, seeing no one and not speaking a word. I had not seen many of the attractions I have come to expect from Coe Park—no coyotes, no bobcats, no elk, barely even a deer—but the solitude had given me a great gift. It had untied all the knots in my psychological and emotional rope. My receptors began to pick up signals that are usually lost in the din and racket of life here on the anthill. I had witnessed and been truly present for a shift in the wind, the first drops of rain, the interplay of light and clouds on the edge of a coming storm.

And all this happened (it never ceases to amaze me) just over the hill from home and just down the road from six million people.

(Originally published in *The Gilroy Dispatch* last summer)

Fire Isn't Fire
by Ken Hulick

Humans have domesticated fire for thousands of years, but we are just beginning to understand the role that fire plays in shaping our natural vegetation. We tend to look at fire as some sort of calamity where things are destroyed, lives are risked, losses are incurred. But that isn't the whole story.

Fire reoccurs in time frames that are sometimes longer than a human lifetime, with effects that can be extreme or subtle. The 1988 fires in the Yellowstone area are instructive, as they tend to occur on a 200- to 400-year cycle and are what is known as a "stand replacing" fire. That is, many of the trees are killed, and reproduction of new trees covers large areas. The change seems dramatic, and we see it as devastating and requiring a long time to heal. But the reality is that our lives are too short to see all the stages of the process, and we just happened to be watching when a dramatic event occurred. In fact, this cycle of buildup of trees and fuels, then fire, then reproduction, then buildup again has been occurring for thousands of years. Research in scarring of trees by fire, as carried out by the Tree Ring Research Lab at the University of Arizona, tells us that the fires are a common occurrence in Yellowstone but that they happen in a long time frame.

Many other areas in the country have similar stories, but on a higher frequency. The ponderosa pine forests of the west had a fire frequency of between 3 and 20 years, caused by both lightning and by Native American burning. Sorting out the exact cause of these fires can be tough, but the fire scars tell us that they did occur. Grasslands are frequently maintained by fire, high water table, and grazing by animals, or a combination of those factors. The bristlecone pines of eastern Cali-

fornia mountains tell the story of fire going back 9,000 years, both from trees living over 4,000 years and from fossil wood—trees that have been long dead but still having rings that can be studied. Many other types of plants show characteristics that lead to successful reproduction in the presence of frequent fires, and some vegetation types are completely dependent on fire for their reproduction.

So the easy answer is to just let all fires burn, right? **Wrong.** We have too much invested in human activities, structures, and lives to be able to do that. What we now need to do is to understand where fire has played an important role and realize that it no longer is playing that role. From there it involves trying to find processes that will simulate historic fire's role, such as the use of mechanical processes like chipping or logging, piling of woody debris and burning in place, co-generation processes where wood is collected and taken to electric generating facilities, or the use of prescribed fire (where intentionally ignited or lightning-caused fires can be allowed to burn under prescribed conditions) where possible. All of these processes have their advantages and disadvantages, but they all need to be considered in a comprehensive, long-term planning process. In addition, we always are going to need effective fire suppression organizations at all levels of government.

Fire historian Steven Pyne states that we live on the only planet that we know of where fire is actively shaping vegetation, and where humans are the only species capable of harnessing and willfully using this important process. We must try to manage large parts of our ecosystems with a view to ensuring that vegetated areas continue to serve the processes of making oxygen, storing carbon, holding water underground during dry seasons and letting is out slowly, and providing beautiful areas for us to view natural processes and wild things.

Many fires will have to be controlled, vegetation in some areas will be committed to human uses, but some protected areas might be able to have some fires managed as prescribed fires. Fire isn't fire.

Park News

by Michael Ferry
Supervising Ranger

Welcome to the New Year! "Out with the old and in with the new," as they say. As we look forward to the new challenges and exciting adventures that Coe will offer this year, I would like to mention a few changes in the works. Of course we have more staff changes to announce, which seems to be an ongoing theme lately. I also have some exciting news about PRA-sponsored special events coming up this year that should make things interesting.

I am happy to announce Amy Palkovic as our new Sector Environmental Scientist. Amy will replace Jeannine Koshear and will report to the Gavilan Sector. (Note the change in title from Resource Ecologist to Environmental Scientist.) Amy's starting date is February 1, and she will be a great addition to the Gavilan Sector. Amy comes over from the Monterey District office where she was an Associate Resource Ecologist. We will have more on Amy in the future. Welcome Amy!

Many of you might have met Ranger John Verhoeven. John is quickly learning much about Coe from his mentor, none other than Barry Breckling. John has taken a real interest in Coe, and I am sure you will be seeing much more of him. Introduce yourself to John, and teach him something new about Coe.

I would also like to introduce Suzanne Downing as our new Office Technician. Suzanne replaced Elaine Hartman and will be working over at the Gavilan Sector office in San Juan Bautista. Suzanne worked with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection prior to her jump to State Parks. Say "Hi" to Suzanne the next time you phone the office.

We can look forward to the same high quality events for next year with some interesting twists and turns. The Coe Backcountry Weekend is back by popular demand with the date set for April 29 and 30 (a week later than usual, due to Easter). You will see a few changes this year that the Coe Backcountry Weekend committee made based on the visitor surveys we received back last year. For the first time ever, we will open the gates on Friday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. for **backpackers only.** This will allow backpackers to get a head start and get deep into the park to those special secret spots. We will also be opening the Bell's Station gate a half hour earlier (7:30 a.m.) on Saturday and Sunday.

The most exciting news coming out this spring is the new Spring Seminars programs. There are currently four planned seminars: Beginner/Intermediate Backpacking, Wildflowers, Trees, and Birds of Henry Coe State Park. Stay tuned for dates, time, and cost. The seminars are sure to be popular, so don't wait to get signed up.

I would like to wish all of the PRA members a Happy New Year. I thank all you for your support to make Henry Coe State Park what it is today. I urge all of you to get involved this year and have some fun up at Coe Park. Let's make it a great year!

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Coe Explorations
by Ranger John Verhoeven

Hello Pine Ridge Association members! My name is John Verhoeven, and I am a new Ranger working at Henry W. Coe State Park. I feel very fortunate to have this opportunity to work at Coe as well as with the PRA. Before I became a State Park Ranger, I hiked at Coe Park a few times with my wife. After each visit I felt I had barely even seen the park, yet I saw so much wildlife, flowers, and beautiful landscapes in such a short time. Little did I know that someday I would get the chance to work at Coe.

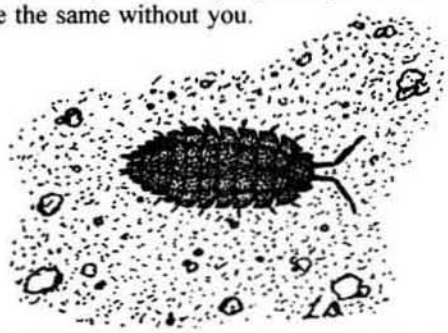
My career with State Parks began in 2003 when I started working in the Monterey District, and this last November I took a position in the Gavilan Sector, of which Coe is a part. Being new to working at Coe Park and learning all I can from Barry Breckling, volunteers, and park staff has been exciting for me. The depth of knowledge of the people at Coe is extensive and entertaining.

I would like to introduce this column to the Ponderosa as a way to share stories and discoveries about Coe Park as I learn about being a Ranger here. I remember one day at the Gavilan Sector Office I listened to the phone messages for the sector. There was one from a man named Seido who was going to the Hot Springs on Saturday.

I remembered the name and thought he must be the previous owner of the Gilroy Hot Springs property that became recently part of the park. Gilroy Hot Springs is part of my patrol. The spring's area is closed to the public right now, as State Parks works to open the area to the public. Typically when I patrol there I don't run into anyone, except for this day when I saw Mr. Seido.

Mr. Seido showed me some of the things he had built at the springs, and he told me some of his family history associated with the Hot Springs. It was intriguing to talk to a person right out of the history of the old Hot Springs Resort. Talking with Mr. Seido left me wanting to find out more about the hot springs and its history.

Every time I patrol at Coe I see something new or something familiar—like the coyote that likes to walk in the Manzanita Point group camp area. I hope you enjoy joining me as I explore Coe. Thank you for helping Henry Coe State Park; it wouldn't be the same without you.



A New Edition of the Coe Park Map
by Winslow Briggs

As you all know, Henry W. Coe State Park is growing. It currently covers 87,000 acres (according to Bob Patrie, 87,004.61 acres—close to 136 square miles!). In 2002, the Pine Ridge Association published its first map based on Bob Patrie's careful GPS measurements, a map on which the twists and turns of the park's more than 250 miles of roads and trails are accurate within a matter of yards. It was also the first park map to have shading with index and minor contour lines throughout. At that time, we printed 10,000 maps—5,000 of the water-resistant (and sweat-resistant!) plastic maps and 5,000 paper maps. Believe it or not, only a bare handful of these maps remain. During the period between 2002 and the present, the park has grown as the result of four acquisitions: the Gilroy Hot Springs property, a 10-acre parcel just north of Bear Mountain, the 222-acre Kickham Ranch, and the 769-acre Mustang addition along County Line Road east of Raven Pond Trail. Clearly the coincidence of the acquisitions with the rapid depletion of the number of maps available for sale presented an urgent timetable for producing a second edition. It was just barely possible to keep the map the same size still using a scale of 1:24,000 (as with the USGS quadrangle maps of the park area), and this was achieved only by having the Mustang Addition extend beyond the normal map neatline. The map also includes an inset that details the soon-to-be-opened visitor center at Dowdy Ranch. Finally, the darker index contours on the new edition will be at 200-foot intervals rather than the rather awkward 250-foot interval on the 2002 map.

Over the entire four-year period, Bob Patrie and I have been accumulating other changes: minor corrections to mileages (there were a couple of beauts that needed fixing!); alignment of relocated trails; where necessary, correction of the mileages and elevation changes found in the five tables on the map; and alteration of nomenclature of certain trails and roads in a few cases to reflect changes recommended by the Trails Advisory Committee and adapted by the state. Once again we have gone to Allan Cartography in Medford, Oregon, to do the cartographic revision and Pikes Peak Lithographing Company in Colorado Springs to do the printing. And once again we are ordering 10,000 maps. However, this time we are ordering 8,000 of the far more popular plastic maps and only 2,000 of the paper maps. The cover is a beautiful photograph taken by Larry Haimowitz of Willson Ridge near the serpentine area.

At the time of this writing, these changes have all been completed, the cartography stage is finished, and Bob and I are awaiting the final proofs before authorizing printing. A third firm is "ripping" the cartographic files (converting them into a form to be used by the printer), and it is our hope that the map will be truly in press early in February. The first edition of the map won recognition from the California League of Park Associations (CALPA—to which the Pine Ridge Association belongs) as the best state park map in California (they missed

a few goofs!). It is our hope and expectation that the second edition would still come in first and would win hands down over the first edition in such a CALPA competition. You will all have to be the judges.

Visit the Backcountry of Henry Coe State Park

by Diana Maloney

It's that time again! For one spectacular weekend this spring, Henry W. Coe State Park will again open the gate at Bell's Station on Highway 152 east of Gilroy. The Coe Backcountry Weekend, held in the little-traveled east side of the 87,000-acre park, is scheduled for **April 29–30, 2006**. This event, sponsored by the Pine Ridge Association and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, allows visitors vehicle access to a remote and beautiful area. Hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians have a special opportunity to see and enjoy an area isolated from the park's Morgan Hill entrance by long distances and rugged terrain.

The day-use fee for the event is $20 per vehicle, for either Saturday or Sunday. The fee for camping or backpacking Saturday night is $40 per vehicle. The fee for backpacking Friday and Saturday nights is $50 per vehicle. There is no limitation on the number of people in a vehicle. Carpooling is encouraged.

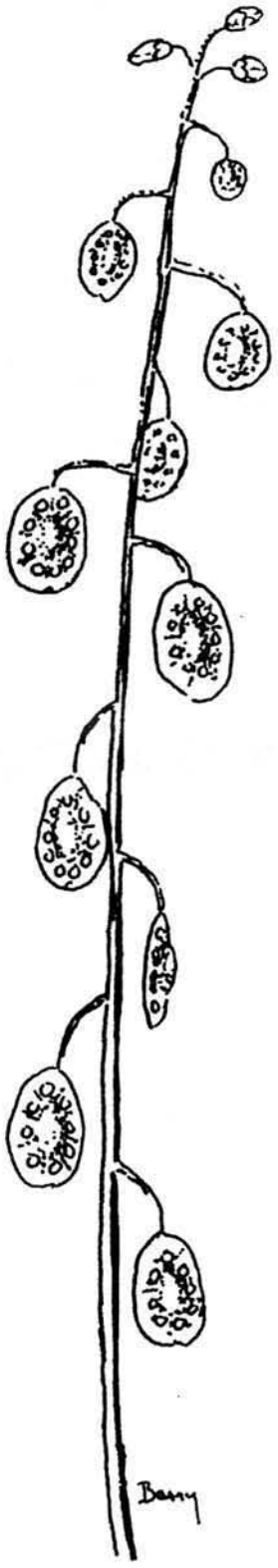
Entrance is by application only. One application is accepted per address. Applications are available on the Coe Park website. The form will also be available at Coe Park headquarters, and at the Morgan Hill, Gilroy, and Modesto libraries. Written requests for applications (include a self-addressed stamped business envelope) should be addressed to Application Forms, Coe Backcountry Weekend, 1410 Terri Lynn Court, Gilroy, CA 95020-9220.

To be eligible for the drawing, applications must be postmarked by February 28. In early March, applications will be drawn until the vehicle limit is reached. For those applications drawn, a package containing the following will be sent: backcountry entrance ticket and more information about the event. For those applications not drawn, checks will be returned with apologies. Applicants will hear from park staff, one way or the other, by mid-March.

Backpackers only will be allowed to come in Friday afternoon between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. They will register at the entrance gate for their backpacking destination, and park anywhere along the Kaiser Aetna Road between Center Flats Road and County Line Road.

The gate will open for all others at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday. As always, everyone must be on their way out by 5:00 p.m. on Saturday or Sunday. Only those people camping overnight Saturday at the Orestimba Corral will be allowed to drive that far. Everyone else will park on the Kaiser Aetna Road. The popular shuttle will be running between a location near your car and the Orestimba Corral.

For more information, please refer to our website, *http://www.coepark.org*.



New Members through December
by Jim Wright

We are pleased to welcome the **new members** listed below. Thank you for your support, and welcome to the Pine Ridge Association!

Mavis Ellis, Gilroy
Fritz Glasser, Corte Madera
Pete Holloran and family, Santa Cruz
Ken Lillemoen, Milbrae
Carl & Laura Norton family, Dripping Springs, TX
Stan Soles, Redwood City
Shirley Wright and family, Morgan Hill

We need your help to keep our membership list current and accurate. If you are a paid member, your *Ponderosa* mailing label includes an expiration date. (No expiration date for life members and organizations.) If you have any questions regarding your membership or if you would like to update your address, please contact us.

E-mail:	PRA@CoePark.org
Snail mail:	9100 East Dunne Ave., Morgan Hill, CA 95037
Fax:	408/778-5749
Phone:	408/779-2728

PRA Calendar

Saturdays, March 11 and March 25; backpack trip on April 1 and 2: **Backpacking (Beginning/Intermediate) Seminar.** Please see the insert in this issue of the newsletter about the new seminar offerings. This one on backpacking will be led by Bill Workman and Jack Howe.

Saturday, March 18: **Spring at Coe Park.** This weekend marks the beginning of the interpretive programs at Coe Park. There are hikes on Saturdays, an evening program at the Visitor Center on Saturday evenings, and wildflower walks on Sundays. Activities are also planned to start out of Hunting Hollow. See the Spring Program insert in this newsletter or call the Visitor Center for additional information (408/779-2728).

Saturday, March 18: **Wildflower Seminar.** Please see the insert in this issue of the newsletter about the new seminar offerings. This one on wildflowers will be led by Ranger Barry Breckling and Judy Breckling.

Saturday, March 25: **Trail Day.** Help work on trails in the park. We have two trail days at Coe Park; one in the fall and one in the spring. For more information about what a typical work day is like, please look at our website: *http://www.coepark.org/trailwork.html.* For more information and to sign up, please call the Visitor Center (408/779-2728).

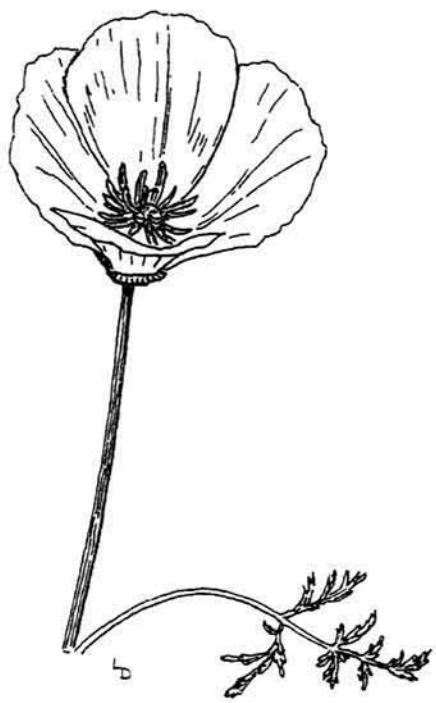
Saturday & Sunday, April 1 & 2: **PRA Outing to Pacheco Falls.** Join Ranger Barry Breckling on this weekend outing to a beautiful place at Coe Park, and one that would take some effort to get to if you started hiking from the Visitor Center. For more information and to sign up, please call the Visitor Center (408/779-2728).

Saturday, April 8: **Tree Seminar.** Please see the insert in this issue of the newsletter about the new seminar offerings. This one on trees will be led by Dr. Winslow Briggs.

Sundays, April 9, April 23, and May 7: **Bird Seminar.** Please see the insert in this issue of the newsletter about the new seminar offerings. This series of three sessions on the identification of birds by sight and sound will be led by Kevin Gilmartin and Barbara Bessey.

Saturday & Sunday, April 29 & 30: **Coe Backcountry Weekend.** This very popular event fills up quickly; admission is by a lottery system. A flyer was mailed separately to all PRA members. Applications are also now available at the Coe Park website. This year's event will offer backpacking on Friday night (new this year), and the gates will open earlier on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Applications need to be postmarked by February 28 to be considered. For up-to-date information about the event, please check out our website: *http://www.coepark.org/orestimba.html.*

Sunday, May 14: **Mother's Day Breakfast at Coe Park.** This year's breakfast again will be held at the Ridgeview camp site. Tickets for this event will go on sale at the Visitor Center on April 15. A form for ordering tickets will also be posted on our website in early April. The event sells out very quickly, so get your tickets early!



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The Ponderosa is a publication of the Pine Ridge Association with approximately five issues per year. The PRA's mission is to enhance and enrich the public's experience at Henry Coe State Park through education and interpretation. Articles and artwork relating to the natural history, history, and management of the park are welcome. Please send submissions to the editors at 127 Glenwood Avenue, Woodside, CA 94062-3512; or call 650/851-7813.

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