THE PINE RIDGE ASSOCIATION • HENRY W. COE STATE PARK •

The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

Autumn 2008

Walk in the Wild

by Elias Funez (with photographs)

Do you ever look at our hillsides to the west and wonder what lies beyond? Every day thousands of travelers drive up and down the designated scenic Interstate 5, but few venture beyond the comfort of flatland and straight roads to explore the canyons and crevices of the Diablo Range. Growing up in Patterson, I have spent many hours as a child and as an adult walking the watersheds of Del Puerto Creek, enjoying the perspective shift that the hills have to offer while being only minutes outside of town.

With very few public access points to the vast swath of land that lies between Patterson and San Jose, travelers along the few roads that do exist really get the feeling of the expansiveness that this virtually untouched area has to offer.

Time has gone by, and my curiosity for the hillsides never seems to be satiated. Learning about the Mexican patriot Joaquin Murrieta who used to outrun search posses with hiding places up Del Puerto Canyon and the Orestimba Wilderness during the time of California's Gold Rush and statehood intrigues me further. Murrieta sympathized with the struggle of the Californios as well as those of the Native Americans who used to live here. Evidence of their existence there is prevalent now only in the grinding rocks that line the creek sides.

So much beauty and history lie in these hillsides. I love how the wind blows the dry grass with its golden, glowing sway in the blistering sunlight of an endless summer, building up anticipation for the rainy season and the day the hills turn green. Spring lasts for only a minute up in the canyon, before the rain stops and the sun comes out to start the whole cycle over again.

Keeping a close eye on the weather and waiting for spring again this year, I decided to take a little time to walk farther into the hillsides than I have before. Initially my trek was planned for two weeks, with a hike up Del Puerto Canyon into the San Antone Valley, down into the remote northern boundaries of Henry W. Coe State Park, down onto the Orestimba Creek, and following it back to Interstate 5 and the Central Valley. However, realizing that this time of year is one of the busiest times for me, with art shows, general plan, and planning commission meetings, I decided to shorten my trek to Henry Coe State Park and the Orestimba Creek Wilderness that originates there.

Governor Schwarzenegger put this state park on the list of parks to close along with dozens of others if the budget cuts go through. If closed, the state could save about $67,000. With only a few paid positions, Henry Coe Park's existence has relied on the help of the many volunteers who care for the park.

Besides the budget cut threat, there have also been various discussions about damming Orestimba Creek and further

Inside this issue . . .

Memories from Barry Breckling's last day

Volunteer activities and projects in the park

A new group: Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs

Tribute to long-time volunteer James "Fitz" Fitzharris

. . . and more!

expanding the developing community of Diablo Grande out into this region. After all, huge maps with the title "The Push to Privatize" on them are always on display during events at Diablo Grande's golf courses. The current housing and golf course area that most know is only one small phase in plans that encompass lands that stretch all the way to Orestimba Creek. Some say that development in our hillsides will help preserve our vital farmland in the future, and I agree to a certain extent. But our fragile natural resources shouldn't give way to row after row of sprawling bedroom communities aimed to accommodate the upper class. Our dwindling designated wilderness areas will not get bigger, they will only get smaller.

Despite all the bad news, I had heard good things of the miles of trail that lay inside the neighboring state park, the largest in Northern California. So I figured there couldn't be a better time to check it out. The relatively few access points to the 87,000-acre park, which restrict the usage of motor vehicles within, help to keep this park extremely isolated and untouched the way it has been for thousands of years.

Psyching myself up for the immense physical feat I was about to embark upon, I would mention to people my plans of backpacking solo across the Diablo Range from Morgan Hill to Newman. Most reactions were nothing short of calling me crazy, or that hiking alone is frowned upon. I had considered inviting some friends along for the hike, but didn't want anyone to get upset if I stopped to take a photo for too long, or have someone spoil it for me by being ungrateful for taking them somewhere unique and beautiful, as has happened to me before. I'm very resourceful on my own, making the decision to go alone an easy one, and I was actually looking forward to a little isolation and solitude, away from cell phone reception, living off of my backpack, having a very natural experience for a week. On previous hiking trips, I've had all sorts of encounters with wild animals, sharing the same watering hole as wild pigs, observing bears walking the same path as me,

heeding the warning of a few rattling snakes, and I've realized that as long as these animals are respected, their intentions are not to harm you.

Checking in with the park rangers was a lot more comforting than the reactions of those back in Patterson. They assured me that the mountain lions stay well fed during the spring and that they should leave me alone, that there are no more bears in Coe Park, the wildflower display in the Orestimba Wilderness was impressive, and that a ranger patrols the isolated eastern edge of the park about once a week in case I got into any trouble.

So on Saturday, March 15, I was dropped at the Henry Coe State Park headquarters outside of Morgan Hill, let my family know I would be back by Easter, and started out on my 32-mile journey across the Diablo Range with my 67-pound backpack full of the necessary provisions, appropriate forms of self-defense, and of course camera gear, and back-up camera gear to keep me shooting no matter what. Carrying excess unused weight can be a backpacker's nightmare, so finding dual uses for items like a heavy-duty tripod that doubled as a walking stick helped make the trek a little easier. The old photographic contraptions I carried along with my newer digital equipment took their toll in weight and space, but for a photographer like myself, they are just as important as the food I took along.

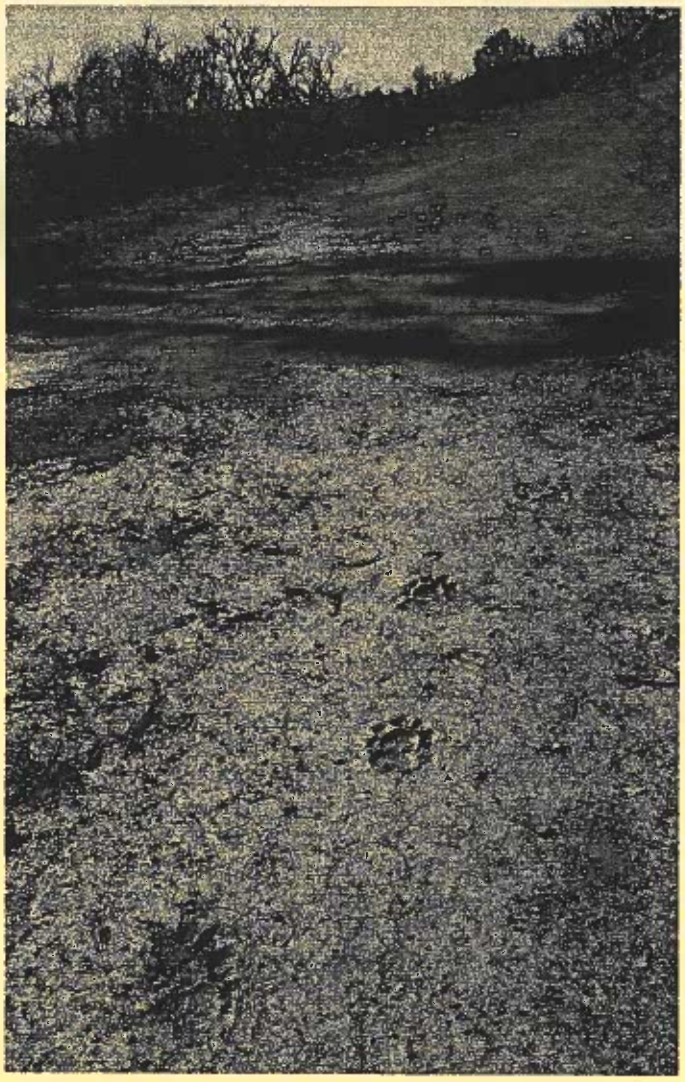
Studying the park maps, I planned the easiest route possible, with the fewest ridges I would have to traverse before reaching the origins of the Orestimba Creek, and after two days, two ridges, and 14 miles of steep terrain behind me, I stood on the divide of the Diablo Range, passing from Santa Clara County down into the Orestimba Wilderness, one of the most remote portions of Stanislaus County.

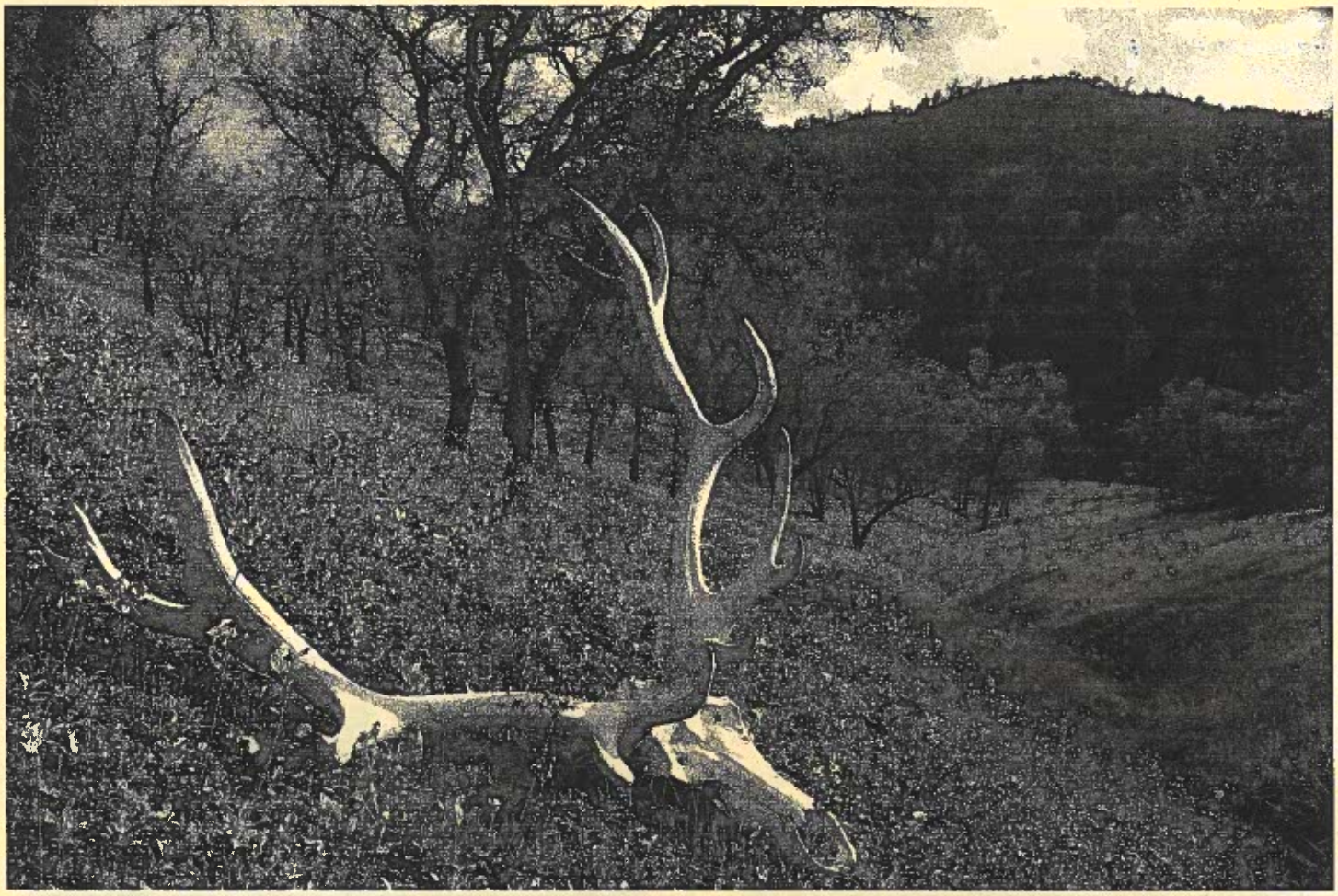
There's something about the Orestimba Wilderness. It's really hard to put a finger on it. It has some sort of mysticism to it, a presence about it when you're there. It felt as if I were coming in to experience another chapter in the resolution of an ongoing saga between nature and man. Through the abundance of trees and flowers beginning their bloom, the abundance of flowing water, the constant squawking of nearby wild turkeys, the distant howl of coyotes through the night, something still seemed void. This land was too pristine, too fertile, for it to be completely absent of humans, and I knew at one time it hadn't been. I could almost picture scenes going on in my head of natives walking the same path I had, living a symbiotic relationship with nature. That's what was missing. And here I was, in a sense, to occupy the land once again, for a short period of time just as they did not more than 200 years ago.

The park rangers told me that no one had really checked into the area for quite some time and that the majority of park visitors stick to within a radius of the three park entrances. So after two days of solitude, I was quite surprised to see a California Department of Forestry vehicle followed by two other unmarked 4x4s riding along one of the jeep trails deep in the Orestimba Wilderness.

Of the 87,000 acres of Henry Coe State Park, 47,760 of those acres fell victim to the Lick fire, which started of human causes back in September 2007. The fire spread from the northwestern edge of the park, traveled south, and was held just to the west of the Orestimba. Traveling across the ridgetops days prior made it easy to see the extent of the damage. Grass had regrown in some areas, but for the most part even on the verge of spring, the fire torn areas remained black and charred. So I figured the CDF firefighters must have been in the area to check on the extent of the damage.

Each day along the Orestimba I noticed the same three vehicles come and go, and by the next evening on my way out of the northeastern portion of the park after the vehicles had gone, I seemed to have come across their point of interest. Two man-made holes dug in the ground just off the main path, shovels, pick axes, a broom, a dust pan, and various sifting equipment lay strewn about the site. It didn't take me too





long to figure out that these people were excavating some sort of archaeological site. The park rangers hadn't told me that this area was off limits, and no signs were posted for people to steer clear. So with the utmost carefulness, not touching anything but my camera, I quickly inspected the site and was on my way.

Picking up the pace nearing the park boundary, I noticed that the gentle, meandering creekbed I had been following north started to turn east towards the central valley, and I was pushing to make time if I wanted to stay on schedule and break for camp before the light was gone. Beyond the park, the dirt jeep trail goes off to private property, and the trail by the creekside was nonexistent. The steep hillsides of metamorphic rocks closed in on the canyon as the creek picked up volume and speed, allowing just enough room for the rushing water and many slippery boulders. I had come so far, already over 20 miles, and I could feel the end of my journey nearing, turning back to the park entrance would be grueling, time consuming, and not an option for me. So I trudged on, boots and socks soaked, dark clouds looming over me blotting out the light and looking like it was going rain.

Ultimately I had to turn around. I remembered my already bad ankles injured from skateboarding incidents, and the thought of stumbling over slippery rocks in the dark with 67 pounds on my back made me realize that getting hurt on someone's private property was not going to be a pleasant experience. But I had plans B and C. My camp the night before was at the terminus of Robison Creek into the Orestimba, and a clearly marked trail would take me up over 3,100-foot Mt. Stakes and into the upper San Antonio Valley where I could have a ride pick me up. Or I could ask the CDF archaeologists if they would be kind enough to give me a lift after one of their work sessions.

The next morning after hearing the familiar vehicles pass through the wilderness, I walked to the site where an archaeologist from CSU Bakersfield and her students were busy sifting through dirt uncovering fragments from the site. They said they would be out there for the next few days and would be more than happy to take me out to Bell's Station off of Pacheco Pass where they had entered.

Being as curious as I am, I asked them about the archaeological site. I had figured they were investigating something uncovered by the Lick fire, and sure enough they said that one of the bulldozers had plowed over this site during the fire fight

and disturbed what lay below. They didn't want to be too specific with the details and didn't want their photos taken to ensure the future security of the site. Given the area's geological makeup, prehistoric bones or dinosaurs could be ruled out, and given the site's proximity to the water and rich history of Native Americans in the area led me to believe that the site had to be Northern Yokut in nature.

So while the original itinerary of my trip was altered, it did allow me an extra couple days in the upper regions of the Orestimba Wilderness to relax and photograph a little more before getting a ride out. My last day in the wilderness was also the first day of spring. I climbed up a nearby ridge and turned my cell phone on for the first time, getting spotty but reliable reception, I called in my ride to meet me on Pacheco Pass. Driving back home along I-5, we drove over the Orestimba Creek, and I looked into the hills where I was supposed to be finishing the trek, still thinking about the unsure future of our public and private lands, but I felt in no way that my trip was unaccomplished. I know one day I will return to the Orestimba Wilderness, and I encourage all to schedule a trip there soon, before it's all gone, and please write your legislators to recommend that our state parks not be compromised.

Original article published in The Patterson Irrigator on April 5, 2008.

Just a Handshake

by Mike Meyer

The ranger was sitting at his desk but facing out. This is behind the counter in the Coe Visitor Center. A big knot of volunteers was also behind the counter, and the ranger was hidden back in the little office, which is the size of a walk-in closet in some houses. The ranger is a big man, and he sat straight on the chair and was eye level with some of us. Everyone was talking and milling, all happy to be up there and seeing each other, and there weren't any visitors though it was Saturday about 9 a.m. The ranger sat still and did not speak. His eyes were opened wide, and I had the impression he was seeing between the bodies, above the heads, beyond the counter, out among the things high up in the joists of the store area where the hawks and eagle are mounted, and the lion. Maybe words wouldn't work at the moment, but it was also like he was with other things, memories or experiences maybe.

I realized we were overcrowding him, and this set the tone for me, changed my approach. I wasn't going to bug a guy for attention on his last day when that's all he'd been giving for 30 years, so that everyone thought of him as one of those good friends you want to see. I see now I wanted to get near, too, soak in some of the intangible friendliness around him, but I didn't right then.

Then Eric the maintenance worker collared me and Greg to go move tables out of some horse trailers into the back of the white barn. We did it with him and a couple of others—Kitty's husband Ben was there, a horse guy who always seemed like he should be sitting around a fire at night with Jack Palance laughing at Billy Crystal and his city greenhorns. Afterward I went back to the visitor center, and Judy was back there in the office on a chair hidden by all the volunteers, too. I threaded through and was glad to see her. The ranger was still in his chair, it had been 20 minutes, and he still wasn't doing stuff like working at the computer or writing reports at the desk or talking about something someone was doing in the park or about an old map that showed the bridle trail from the hot springs to soda springs, or the kind of wildflower year you might get in a dry year, all manner of neat stuff that we volunteers just ate up like a pack a dogs coming across a hot dog on the side of the road. Ok, not exactly like that but, anyway he was just sitting, with his eyes widened and not really talking that I saw. I talked with Judy about her job and the ranger asked about mine—I'd been out of work awhile before this—I was at Hitachi now, wasn't I? He asked questions about my job, the subject of which ran its course in less than 10 seconds, and then he went out, and I said how crowded it was in there with volunteers and that I was thinking about going for a walk to Heather and Margaret Mary to see if Heather the park aide really needed help since I was signed up to work, or could I actually go? Heather always says yes (the ranger, too) though sometimes not right away, she hears you but doesn't answer and is looking off somewhere, then says a thing just like she's imagined how neat it would be out there where you want to go, envisioning it. This time she responded pretty quickly, if you want a project there's a bit of poison oak on the Mile Trail that needs trimming, in that sweet Limey accent, then Judy threw in that the bottom of China Hole Trail needed trimming, too, so that settled it, I'd do the loop.

Judy said where'd he go? and you could tell she wanted to go find him but I thought he was just out someplace wrapped back in things, and the old ranch house came to mind. She kept talking about my little project, too, and said I needed gloves and better not go cutting poison oak without gloves. I went and got my gear and came back and then was walking down the sidewalk to leave, and Judy came up from the metal barn and handed me some gloves, as usual doing a nice thing for people because it needed doing.

I consider myself the luckiest one that day, but going out the Corral Trail I had to ask myself what was I doing? It was my plan that day to shadow the ranger and maybe sneak notes on impressions of him. And just like that I'd gone and done something else. I didn't let it bother me much because you never know how it'll go, and then I got out on that last stretch after the sign to Springs Trail holding my palms out feeling the heavy seed pods on the grass leaning over the path, and maybe that's why I forgot everything else and went and spent the day passing down through the meadows of Pine Ridge off the road and coming upon little villages of blue-eyed grass where the grass thinned, and four spots and some red maids and captain's beard (Judy identified the beards for me later). I looked at the blue-eyed grass and saw their happy faces. Once I got on my knees for a closer look, the bright yellow eye, the circle of purple outside, then from rich dark purple to eye-shade purple toward the edges with dark lines up the petals. There were six petals but Judy told me (forced me to learn) that only three were real petals, that the others were sepals, those things that are usually green that fold the flower in its wings before it blooms. I studied this on one and saw that every other petal was wider, son of a gun.

I went down toward China Hole and met Sam, my new hero, using the pick on a wall of dirt. He's spent three years on the China Hole Trail, four hours a day every other day. He's made the trail so awesome for everyone, widening and clearing and putting rock barriers so the water channels off and doesn't erode. I thought about him when I was walking again, how he doesn't work every day because he gets sore so he works out with a swim on alternate days. And I tried to guess his age . . . I've seen him in the park for 10 years, and he was retired back then, and I figured most guys his age are watching Randolph Scott westerns on TV 12 hours a day.

I did a little snipping on the far end of the trail, then went over to the Mile Trail, and it was all shady and viney and creeky in there with water music the whole way, and I cut the poison oak back where it came over. Some kids came tripping down the trail with backpacks and said hi and asked, hey are those bay leaves, and I said yes, and the main kid said

cool, and they went on. Then a guy in shorts was coming down and he was wide-eyed and walking slow and didn't care talk, but he was smiling and whispered when he passed, it's all so beautiful.

Higher up I stopped at the fallen-in house on the creek and saw all the work someone had done once, all the carrying of boards and roof tin and flue and paint and now it was a wreck. I sat by a pool in the shade, hoping the house was a good place for the guy for a while. The pool was clear and shady, and you could see the rocks and little pebbles a foot down in the whiskey-colored water. A little later I rested at Madrone Soda Springs on the burnt log by the sign. I pulled off my boots and thought about the man who shot himself, how some hikers found some of his bones and a shotgun a month ago just up from there. The loneliness in him, I thought, and how bad it must have been that he could plan it and carry it out and not find something that would get him through it, and how he lived with it, and there was no let up, and he didn't see any way out. Then I went up the beautiful bastard of a trail to the ridge where you smell the dry grass in summer and the oaks and get the sights as you come higher, Sycamore Canyon, the Narrows, Cordoza Canyon, and the opposite flanks and creases all wooly in trees, but always it gets you, too, because it's durn steep and fools you so many times when you think you're at the top then it goes up more and more. There was a mountain biker resting on the table near the outhouse at the top, and we talked, and he was wide-eyed, tired and happy over the places he'd been, all the way to Kelly Lake that day. I mosied through the skinny-trunked blue oaks and back up the grassy ridge like a blessed soul come back to life among all the wonders along the way and getting somewhat drunk out there, though not too.

The ranger was still at the visitor center, which he often is at that time of day. Heather was gone, but Mason was there, and Nigel looked bored or out of place among so many people he didn't know yet. I talked with Mason about neat stuff like non-digital photography and dark room things and the zone method, the ranger leaning against the window sill maybe listening in but also maybe not. At one point he and I talked for a couple of minutes, and he looked kind of awkward, but I was feeling awkward, too, and didn't notice until now, and he stuck his hand out, and I took it quick. Just a handshake and effortless on his part, it gave me a chance to acknowledge things. I couldn't say any of it, just shook his hand. All those times in the park and all those people and the learning to go with your passion and it opening up for you, it wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for Judy who bugged me at work to come up to the park, and Barry. If not for him back all those years, I couldn't have been there like I have been, and none of the others could either, I think. It's quite a hell of a thing.

Park News

by John Verhoeven
Headquarters Ranger

So quickly it seems that the long days of summer have passed. I remember having to wait until 9 p.m. for the first stars to appear! Fall is coming as well as some relief from the heat, at night anyway. As I write this article, the park experienced its hottest day so far this year of 102°. Despite the heat, many people have still been visiting the park, mainly camping. Every weekend the campground has been full with many new visitors to the park experiencing the peacefulness of Coe.

Another harbinger of autumn is seeing tarantulas at the park. Just last night on a night hike, I saw three males entering female dens as well as a female looking out of a hole. Preparations for the upcoming Tarantula Festival and Barbecue are underway. If you haven't been to the festival, try to make it. The Tarantulas band is playing again, and you can have the chance to let a tarantula crawl on your arm. There are also children's programs. Check out *www.CoePark.org* and click Annual Park Events for more information.

This summer at the park has been very dry, as only about 12" of rain was recorded at park headquarters this year so far. As a result this fire season started early. Streams at the park as well as springs have dried early this year, and flowers have shortened their blooming times. The heat and dryness have a similarity to winter in the sense of quietness. Grasses and some shrubs lie dormant awaiting the rain, and California buckeyes have lost most of their leaves.

Volunteers at the park have been working on many projects including springs maintenance, resource management, grant writing, trail work, and working as uniformed volunteers. New uniformed volunteer training is starting again with six new volunteers eagerly learning about Coe and duties they will have working as volunteers. As you might have read in a previous *Ponderosa,* progress is being made on installing an ADA-accessible trail at Hunting Hollow. I'll keep you posted on the progress of the trail.

There is another interesting project being researched by uniformed volunteer Carolyn Straub. Carolyn is putting together an anthology of Sada Coe's writings, a project that has long been in the works. Look for a future article about this anthology.

More attention is being given to Gilroy Hot Springs by a group of volunteers who are new to Coe. The group leader used to live at the Hot Springs, and some of the other volunteers did also. The group will assist the state in cleaning up the site and raising money to support the restoration of the Hot Springs area. The restoration of Gilroy Hot Springs is a long-

term effort in partnership with the state, Pine Ridge Association, and Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs.

Thank you for your support of the Pine Ridge Association and Henry W. Coe State Park. Your love of this place shares the park with the public through events, interpretation programs, and supporting the park to continue its mission.

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Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs—FGHS: "Fogs," "Frogs," or "Foghies"?

by Laura Dominguez-Yon

The PRA board enthusiastically and unanimously voted to approve Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs as a new subgroup! Come, join us if 1) you're curious, 2) you've heard about the hot springs or seen the signs along the road, 3) you've ever visited the site, 4) you have stories about it! You qualify and are welcome to join us!

What is this subgroup? It is still in the formation stages. Your input is welcomed! We share the common goal of increasing public access, of preserving the historic area, of conserving the open space, and of re-establishing use of the mineral water. We have diverse views, beliefs, priorities, and opinions. Let's agree to disagree, and to do what will provide maximum use for maximum people with the smallest impact on the neighborhood and the environment, and will provide ongoing revenues to continue the vision.

What is the Gilroy Hot Springs? Most will know that, as of 2003, it is a part of Henry Coe State Park. Some know it is a State and National Historic Monument. Some know it was a popular resort prior to the 1960s. Few know it was an elite retreat for society leaders. The Japanese presence represents about one-third of its history.

Among those who have already joined are former residents and descendants of previous owners. We have people interested in mineral springs, people who live nearby, and people who are out of state, and out of the country. Please join us! We have a YahooGroup *http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FriendsVolunteers*, and we will have a website *www.FriendsofGilroyHotSprings.org*. For more information, call Laura Dominguez-Yon: 408/314-7185

Missing Fitz

by Barry Breckling

So you're a brand new uniformed volunteer at Henry W. Coe State Park. You've had three days of training, and it's been a great experience so far. There you are packed up for the next training, the weekend Ride-Along into the park's backcountry. "Bring lunch for two days," you're told, and "we'll feed you dinner and breakfast."

After a wonderful day out seeing the northern portions of the park's backcountry, you're let out of your dusty vehicle at Pacheco Camp and given a choice of an outing. After you return from the outing, you see a bunch of people crowded around a table where a tall stately man has just set down a giant steaming frying pan. You soon learn that you'd better push your way up to the pan. Snooze and you lose out on the best Cajun shrimp you've ever eaten. Well actually, you never lose when Fitz Fitzharris is cooking. More shrimp appear . . . and then crab cakes. Fitz's motto, "You never have enough until it's too much."

More appetizers appear on the tables, and soon you're in line for one of the best meals you've ever had. This year maybe it's salmon and pork loin fresh off the barbecue, or another year maybe it was a scrumptious beef roast, and there are always cashew-stuffed mini pumpkins for vegetarians (and others who could sneak some). Usually there are garlic mashed potatoes and green beans. And for dessert, cream puffs, brownies, and lemon bars. You ask yourself, how could someone cook such a wonderful meal out in the wild? Well, that was Fitz's favorite thing to do.

It was James Fitzharris, better know simply as Fitz, whose outdoor cooking delighted ten years of volunteers on the Ride-along and at other volunteer events, and several thousand people who came to the park's TarantulaFest barbecue.

Besides cooking as a volunteer, Fitz was involved with the park's horse patrol, although no one can recall seeing him on a horse; he was always on one of his mules. He was probably at his best when he could pack in or drive a mule-pulled wagon somewhere and then pull out the Dutch ovens and make a delicious chicken and dumpling stew followed by a peach cobbler. You might get talked into turning the handle of the hand-cranked ice cream maker if you wanted ice cream with your cobbler.

On July 14, at the age of 63, Fitz passed away at his home in Hollister. He leaves behind his wife, Gwen Schlemmer, and his sons Christian and Sean Fitzharris. We will miss Fitz's food, of course, but what we'll really miss is that bigger than life, sweet, gentle guy who deeply touched so many of our lives.

New Members through July

by Margaret Mary McBride and Jim Wright

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

Jeanne Anson, Morgan Hill
Shirley & Charles Atkins, Morgan Hill
Parker Hathaway, Gilroy
Greg Hume & family, Mountain View
Antoinette Jardine, Soquel
Leigh Anne Lindsey, Santa Rosa
The Oliver Family, Castroville
Jean Orr, Cupertino
Leah Quenelle & Jim Spaulding, San Jose
Gillian Schultz, San Jose
Fred Sharpe, Port Angeles, WA
Greg Silverman, Menlo Park
Anita Stewart & Kaj Rekola, Mountain View
Lynn Tahernia, Morgan Hill
Maria Wamsley, San Francisco
Jane Wheeler, Santa Clara
Scott Williams, Martinez

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

Saturday, October 4: **Annual Fall TarantulaFest and Barbecue.** Celebrate fall by going on a nature walk, holding a tarantula, enjoying live music, or enjoying a home-cooked meal. Tickets must be ordered in advance. For more information, please call the Coe Park Visitor Center (408/779-2728) or check out our website: *http://www.coepark.org/tfest.html.*

Saturday, November 1: **Fall Trail Day.** Help maintain the trails at Coe Park. No previous experience is necessary. For more information and to sign up, contact Ranger Cameron Bowers (*CBowe@parks.ca.gov*) or Rob Glover (wrglover@yahoo.com). The Coe Park website describes what a typical trail day is like: *http://www.coepark.org/trailwork.html.*

Saturday, November 29: **PRA Coe Thanksgiving Saturday.** Celebrate Thanksgiving **Saturday** at Coe Park. Bring a dish and drinks to share. Hors d'oeuvres will be served starting around 4 p.m. This is always a fun event, rain or shine. Please call the Coe Park Visitor Center for more information and to sign up (408/779-2728).

See you at the park!

Don't forget that the Bell's Station Gate and the Dowdy Ranch Visitor Center are now open for weekend day use until mid-October!

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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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