

The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park



Coe's Charms

By Ron Erskine, President, PRA Board

A Snowy Morning in Coe

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP...Slam! The alarm clock. 5:00am. Normally, this is when I roll out of the sack, throw on some gym clothes, and sleepdrive over to Morgan Hill's Centennial Center to 'spin' and sweat for an hour. This morning, it seemed like an even worse idea than it usually does.

Wait a minute! I've got a better idea. It's cold...in the 30's, and I can hear the rain outside. It's gotta be snowing up at Coe! I roll out of bed. Groping in the dark—don't wake Renée—I manage to gather boots, down parka, rain shell, camera gear. I'm on my way. Boy, those seat warmers are great. A quick stop at a Starbuck's (*tip: no lines at 5:30*), and then I follow Dunne Avenue up, up, up.

6:30am. I am in the parking lot at Coe Park, all alone. It's pitch dark with no hint of dawn in the east, and it's snowing—not delicately, but furiously. I know I shouldn't leave the car idling, but I want to watch the snowflake's diagonal descent across the cones of light. Let's see...I'm sitting warmly in my car, latte in hand, all alone in a blizzard just outside Morgan Hill. I must be doing something right.

Eventually, the black sky begins to turn steely gray. I'd like to be on top of Pine Ridge as the day breaks, so I don the warm and weatherproof layers and

stash my camera and lens safely beneath them. Reluctantly, I leave the warmth of my car and begin the climb up Pine Ridge. Snow adorns everything. Fence posts, the barn, the visitor center, and every pine, oak, and bush are cloaked in white. Even the road, which resists accumulation, is white. Add utter silence to the picture. In the Sierras, this is hohum, but 40 minutes from my Morgan Hill home—this is something special.

I've walked the Monument Trail a hundred times, but I am seeing it as never before. The broad leaves of chest-high toyon bushes hold all the snow the laws of physics will allow. Arching bay tree branches, deciduous valley oaks still carrying their leaves, ponderosa pines, even the naked branches of poison oak bushes carry a load of snow that transforms them into a decoration suitable for Macy's Christmas window.

All the while, snow is falling.

Even though it is only a short walk from the visitor center, the top of Pine Ridge by Eric's Bench is one of the best spots in Coe Park's 87,000 acres. The ponderosa pines give the hilltop the feel of the Sierra foothills. A monstrous oak that recently retired ranger Barry Breckling felt was a

Early Spring 2009



Eric's Bench, photo by
Ron Erskine

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Coe's Charms, continued...

hybrid valley oak/blue oak takes center stage. This setting, and the sweeping views of the Santa Clara Valley make for a spectacular spot in normal circumstances. Seeing it draped in snow at first light was nearly a religious experience.

I spent a couple hours wandering and photographing, trying to find that particularly elegant expression of a particularly elegant morning. If I didn't get it, it's my fault. Looking down toward home, each successive ridge was white, the valleys between them pierced by fingers of clouds—CLICK. Take your pick of valley oaks all around with arching branches draped in snow—CLICK. A bare trail tracing a path through a snow-covered slope and misty skies—CLICK. A snow-covered pine branch arching over an empty memorial bench—CLICK.

By 10:30, I was back in my car heading down the hill, the snow still falling. I was reminded of a lesson Coe Park keeps trying to teach me. It is so easy to discount a place so close to home as ordinary yet, time and again, this park gives me remarkable experiences that the most exotic destinations would struggle to provide. I'm just a slow learner, but school is fun.



A snowy morning in Coe—so close to home.
Photo by Ron Erskine

The Pacific Tree Frog

By Carolyn Straub

Cute things inhabit parks

Over the July Fourth weekend, 2008, Steve and I met a Pacific Tree Frog who'd found shelter in a restroom at the Dowdy Ranch visitor center. We were volunteering as hosts at the visitor center that weekend. The Dowdy Ranch is a wild and isolated place to stay for those outdoors people who crave wilderness. It's always a mystery to us why more folks do not visit the south end of Henry W. Coe State Park. Maybe someday they will. We've stayed out there three or four times this past season. Nice and far away.

For a tiny Pacific Tree Frog, however, it's life as usual, quite normal out there. Its territory includes the park, as the frog is common in northern California. It lives here. We have them in our backyard at home in San Jose. Very loud voice. Very small amphibian. Hard to find. Definitely out there. It has a distinguishing dark stripe through both eyes.

That Saturday, we hiked the Burra Burra Trail at 5pm., a restful and cool time of the day during summer to do so. There are right and wrong times to take hikes. Evenings beginning around 4pm are good times

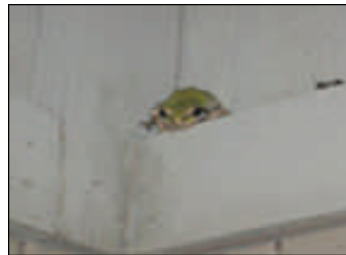


Photo by Steve McHenry

to think about Burra Burra. Its hills are high and rolling, and the sun is setting in the west. Good view of the land.

Tree frogs probably know all this. They can also do things that we can't. For one, their size makes a crack in the bathroom sink the perfect place to fit and search out water. On returning, and throughout that weekend, we continued to visit the facilities known as the restroom. On the wall would be the frog, who'd disappear and then reappear. We discovered that it kept vanishing into the sink hole. It would then crawl the walls. It seemed to like its digs. After all, with one month of rain this past season, a wet place in the sink would be The Place. Or maybe it did get lost.

We decided to get our digital camera and take pictures. We ended up spending a few hours trying to catch its photo. We snapped five in progression. We ended up being stared at as the frog tracked its way across the wall, looking at us as if to ask what the heck are you doing, and who are you, it's my territory. Can't blame it. We are bigger.

Leave it to a frog to have "frog intelligence," though, and survive.

The Falls on Grizzly Gulch

By Mike Meyer

One of the great things about Coe is its size. You can stand on a ridge and look over a big array of ridges and canyons and in that maze see countless new places to explore. There's a mystery out on the land and if you're like me, the lure is strong. After all, no two places are ever alike.

Some places I've found would not interest anyone else, they were just places to rest and look out on a canyon, or a hillside of trees, or across the ridges. Other places I've visited were unique. There's a small pond I like in the folds of the canyons below Center Flats Road called Hurricane Pond. It can be seen from Wagon Road but getting to it is a little adventure since it means leaving the road and venturing down into the wild. I had a bite to eat just above the frozen pond one winter noontime watching some waterfowl feed where the ice had thawed.

I found another special place when I hiked up Grizzly Gulch one February and happened upon a water fall. I had followed Grizzly Gulch Trail to the creek crossing, then turned up-creek. The falls, maybe a mile in, were around 10 feet high. I took a dip in the small pool underneath it, received nature's "baptism." Man, it was cold but fully invigorating. I'd do it again, maybe.

But this falls isn't the special place I'm thinking of. After the swim, I continued up the creek to a second, more substantial falls. There was a sycamore trunk across the creek that was hollowed out yet still alive. Just above, a wide, deep pool then falling water and a rock wall. The hills came down steeply on both sides, trees then chaparral on the north side, the south side a wooly wall of vines, plants, bushes, and oaks. The rock face of the falls was adorned with succulents showered by the mists.

It's hard to say what the falls' height might be. It seems to change depending on where you're seeing it from.

From the sycamore tree, it's about 40 or 50 feet high. But if you sit on the rock at the top of the falls, it's more like 60 feet, or even 70.

Getting to the top is difficult. On the north side you have to clamber through the chaparral and up some steep crumbly slopes. Another time, I crawled up the steep south side through the bushes and vines.

There is another easier way to the top of this falls, which is from the White Cabin. This old hunter's shelter is accessed from an old road off Grizzly Gulch Trail. To find it, locate the sign pointing to Jackson Field and Rodeo Pond then follow the Rodeo Pond arrow. This leads you east across the face of the mountain, which in turn displays the cross-canyon spectacle that is Grizzly Gulch and the forested north face of Willson Peak and Steer Ridge. The trail as it moves roughly parallel above the canyon follows the contours and crosses a few winter streams. It is at the first of these that an old, hard-to-see road takes off downhill. The White Cabin is three-quarters of the way down the hill at the end of the road. From the cabin, you would drop down a couple of steep grassy slopes to the creek, then head west 30 yards or so. You'll find a smooth rock perch right beside the falls.



Grizzly Gulch Falls, photo by Mike Meyer

Park News

By John Verhoeven
Headquarters Ranger



Hello Pine Ridge Association members, and happy spring to you! As I write to you, the park is receiving much needed rain almost daily. Recent water reports call for conservation after three years of drought that Coe has felt as well. Creeks are flowing now and ponds are filling, but overall we need much more precipitation to restore water levels to normal. Despite the long-term drought, wildflowers are beginning to bloom as any park visitor could tell you. White four-petaled Milkmaids have been blooming as well as Lowland Shooting Stars, Indian Warrior, Hound's Tongue, Bigberry Manzanita, and gooseberry. I have even seen a California poppy blooming just outside the park.

The arrival of wildflowers brings me that feeling of renewal and return of long days. I look forward to the beautiful spring days as I imagine you do as well. The welcoming spring is a respite from the tough times people in our area are having with regard to the economy. California State Parks is not immune to this downturn in the economy and the system braces for cuts. As in years past, California State Parks has weathered tough times, as will Coe. Thank you for your support of the park; I hope the park can be an escape for you to reconnect with nature.

Plants and animals are oblivious to the troubles of mankind and give me relief from worry. Tule elk as I wrote in the last newsletter are appearing near and in the park more and more. On several occasions, park visitors, volunteers, and I have seen tule elk grazing near the park. What a welcome sight!

For those of you who attended the PRA annual meeting, you heard about the status of the PRA as well as projects going on in the park and in the park system that affect the park. At the meeting, I announced four PRA member outings—San Antonio Valley, Orestimba, Thomas Addition, and Lakeview Meadows. There is still room on these outings if you are interested in attending them. The PRA calendar on page 5 details the events and dates.

Each event has a confirmation date two weeks before the event to confirm that you are going. Once you are signed up I will contact you via email or phone with further details of times and meeting places. I hope you are able to join me, volunteers, and other PRA members to explore Coe more. Please contact me if you are interested in attending.

The PRA outings are just another thank you from the park, the PRA, volunteers, and park staff that all benefit from your membership.

John Verhoeven
Ranger, Henry W. Coe State Park

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A Sense of Nature

This year's speaker at the PRA annual meeting was Diane West-Bourke, a naturalist who has interpreted nature for many years. Diane served as an interpreter at Big Basin State Park for fourteen years, and has also designed docent training programs for the Filoli Center and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

Diane believes that people need personal experiences in nature. This is especially true for children growing up in cities as many of them have never been to a park or experienced nature in a personal way. Through nature, she believes that we will discover an important sense of connection to the living world and to each other.

Diane said it is so important for volunteers to share their passion for nature with the public and to make sure that the public really sense the connection to the natural world. She left us with a quote: "In the end, we will save only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we have been taught."

Diane also leads hikes and conducts classes in the Bay Area. To learn more about her local nature field classes and eco-travel adventures, visit her website at www.NatureExplorations.net.

The PRA Calendar

Mark your calendars—important dates

Saturday March 14, *Grass class*—see notice on p.8

Saturday March 14, *ROMP trail work* at Hunting Hollow— contact Paul Nam at vocinam@yahoo.com for more information.

Saturday March 21, *Spring at Coe Park*. This weekend marks the beginning of the interpretive programs at Coe Park. There are guided hikes on Saturdays, an evening program at the visitor center on Saturday evenings, and wildflower walks on Sundays. There are also activities starting out of the Hunting Hollow entrance. The schedule of the spring programs is enclosed in this issue. For additional information please visit our website at www.pineridgeassociation.org or call the visitor center (408) 779 2728.

Saturday March 21 & 22, *PRA Orestimba outing*. Join Ranger John Verhoeven on a hike near the very scenic Robison Mountain area. There will be an option to stay overnight in the park on the Saturday night. Please sign up at jverhoeven@parks.ca.gov by 3/7. This event will be cancelled if the weather does not permit road access. For additional information please visit our website www.pineridgeassociation.org or contact John at jverhoeven@parks.ca.gov.

Saturday March 28, *Trail work* at the Dowdy, for more information contact Chere Bargar on (408) 683 2247

Saturday March 28, Artist paint-out contact: Rosemary Rideout at rideout@garlic.com.

Saturday April 11, *PRA Thomas Addition outing*. Join Ranger John Verhoeven on a hike around the beautiful Thomas Addition to look for spring wildflowers. Please RSVP to John Verhoeven at jverhoeven@parks.ca.gov by 4/4. For additional information please call the visitor center (408) 779 2728 or visit our website www.pineridgeassociation.org

Saturday April 11, *ROMP trail day* from Hunting Hollow, contact Paul Nam at vocinam@yahoo.com for more information.

Saturday April 18, *Spring trail day*, contact Rob Glover at wrglover@yahoo.com for more information or to sign up.

Saturday, May 16 FOGHS “*Gilroy Hot Springs Walk Into the Past*”. For more information contact info@FriendsOfGilroyHotSprings.org (408) 314 7185

Saturday May 23, *PRA Lakeview Meadows outing* Join Ranger John Verhoeven for a day hike. Meeting at the Visitor Center. Please RSVP by 5/9 and for information contact John at jverhoeven@parks.ca.gov or visit the website at www.pineridgeassociation.org.

Annual Park Events coming up...

Friday through Sunday April 24, 25, 26 is the *Coe Backcountry Weekend*. This event is always very popular, and fills up quickly; admission is by a lottery system. This year’s event will be starting earlier, allowing backpackers and campers entry at 1.00pm on the Friday. For additional information please visit our website at www.pineridgeassociation.org or call the visitor center (408) 779 2728.

Sunday May 10, *Mother’s Day Breakfast*. Once again this event will take place at Ridgeview campsite. Tickets for this event will go on sale at the visitor center mid-April. **A form for ordering tickets will be posted on our website in early April.** The event sells out very quickly, so get your tickets early! For more information visit: www.pineridgeassociation.org or call the visitor center (408) 779 2728.

Saturday June 13, *Hunting Hollow 5K/10K walk and fun run*. You can register for this fun event on our website, download an entry form at www.pineridgeassociation.org, or call the visitor center (408) 779 2728.

PRA Annual Meeting

By Barbara Bessey

The annual meeting of the Pine Ridge Association was held in Morgan Hill on February 7. Board president Ron Erskine opened the Pine Ridge Association portion of the meeting, introduced the members of the board of directors, and reported on the results of the election of officers for 2009. These officers are: Kevin Gilmartin, vice-president; Winslow Briggs, secretary; and Dan McCranie, treasurer. The other board members are Barbara Bessey, Ann Briggs, Priscilla Campbell (chair of the uniformed volunteer committee), Ross Campbell, and Paul Nam (who was appointed to serve the remaining term of Bob Patrie, who recently resigned from the board). Kevin Gilmartin described some of the accomplishments of the past year, such as the soon-to-be published Sada Coe anthology and the new ADA-accessible trail in Hunting Hollow. Barbara Bessey described the annual fundraising interpretive events. Bob Patrie spoke about the new PRA website that is currently under construction

(www.pineridgeassociation.org) Eventually, the contents of the current website (www.coepark.org) will be folded into this new site. Priscilla Campbell described Coe Connections, the very popular program for school children. Ann Briggs provided an update on the visitor center expansion project. Winslow Briggs provided an update on all of the efforts carried out thus far as part of the fire regeneration study. PRA members were reminded that the board welcomes applications for funds for projects that fit within the association's mission. Members, especially the uniformed volunteers, were encouraged to sign up to work at the various association events, to lead hikes and walks, and put on evening programs for the public.

The meeting of the PRA uniformed volunteer committee followed, chaired by Priscilla Campbell. Priscilla introduced the other members of the committee: Bonnie Stromberg (vice chair), Jim Brady, Linda Keahey, and Rick Leonard. The number of active uniformed volunteers is now 118.

In 2008, volunteers donated more than 15,500 hours, which is equivalent to 7.5 full-time paid employees! Of this total, about 3,600 hours were spent staffing the visitor center and another 2,000 hours providing interpretive programs or other services for the public. This is an amazingly large number of hours. The volunteers were extremely active during 2008, as evidenced by the number of award presentations that followed.

Four individuals who completed the requirements of the volunteer training program are: Bill Barnhart, Debbie Frederick, Mukesh Jani, and John Wilkinson.

Thirteen people who served 50 or more hours beyond the training program advanced to volunteer status: Berdett Bevans, Sue Harwager, Lee Ingraham II, Steve McHenry, Gary Newsome, Karen Reed, Joanne Rife, Michael Sanchez, Mitsi Shine, Carolyn Straub, Jim Swartz, Sigal Tzoore, and Jeff Zolotar.

Five people who had volunteered 250 or more hours, of which at least 100 hours were spent in the visitor center, were promoted to senior volunteer: Colleen Combes, Ken Howell, Diane Scariot, Jim Wright, and Gena Zolotar.

A thermal cup with the association's logo was given to the recipients of the 2008 visitor service award. These are volunteers who spent 48 or more hours working in the visitor center or on other visitor-centered activities during the past year (e.g., presenting programs to visitors or leading interpretive walks or hikes). Forty-five individuals were recognized in this category: Everett Allen, Heather Ambler, Chere Barger, Barbara Bessey, Burdett Bevans, Jim Brady, Ann Briggs, Winslow Briggs, Victor Bubbett, Priscilla Campbell, Bonnie Doran, Darryl Dubois, Bill Frazer, Kevin Gilmartin, Rob Glover, Sue Harwager, Lucy Henderson, Don Holmes, David Hornby, Ken Howell, Ken Hulick, Jodie Keahey, Linda Keahey, Rick Leonard, Diana Maloney, Jim Mason, Steve McHenry, Matt Pauly, Lois Phillips, Bruce Rideout, Rosemary Rideout, Don Savant, Rosemary Schmidt, Greg Scott, Martie Sinclair, Rob Sinclair, Susan Stillman, Carolyn Straub, Bonnie Stromberg, Jim Swartz, Nancy Thomas, Bev VanderWeide, Libby Vincent, Chris Weske, and Bill Workman.

Eighteen volunteers received special recognition for the tremendous numbers of hours they have spent on Coe Park volunteer activities over the years. Between them, they have donated more than 64,900 hours to the park! Heather Ambler, Jim Brady, Darryl Dubois, Mike Harper, Ken Howell, and Rick Leonard each volunteered at least 1,000 hours of service. Priscilla Campbell, Rob Glover, Jodie Keahey, Linda Keahey, and Nancy Valencia each volunteered at least 2,000 hours of service. Libby Vincent volunteered more than 4,000 hours of service. Barbara Bessey and Bill Frazer each volunteered at least 6,000 hours of service. Ann Briggs, Winslow Briggs, and Don Holmes each volunteered more than 7,000 hours of service. And Everett Allen volunteered over 10,000 hours of service!

A special silver pin with the association's logo was presented to those individuals who have participated in the uniformed volunteer program for ten or more years. Seven individuals were so honored this year: Dave Flack, Greg Linden, Marcia Linden, Dave Raiman, Pat Scharfe, Heike Stabenow, and Rainer Stabenow.

A special gold pin with the association's logo was presented to four individuals who have participated in the uniformed volunteer program for twenty or more years: Everett Allen, Barbara Bessey, Judy Breckling, and Kevin Gilmartin.

Ranger John Verhoeven made a presentation to those individuals who had donated 200 hours or more within the past year (and to couples whose combined number of hours totaled 200 hours or more). The hours include the time spent by some uniformed volunteers who volunteered time at other state parks, and the time that some non-uniformed individuals volunteered at Coe Park. Each received a free annual pass to State Parks in California. Thirty-three passes were distributed this year: Everett Allen, Heather Ambler, Chere Bargar, Barbara Bessey, Burdett Bevans, Jim Brady, Ann Briggs, Winslow Briggs, Priscilla and Ross Campbell, Ruby Domino, Darryl Dubois, Ron Erskine, Bill Frazer, Kevin Gilmartin, Rob Glover, Don Holmes, Ken Howell, Jodie Keahey, Linda Keahey, Diana Maloney, Jim Mason, Sam Parker, Bob Patrie, Dick Rawson, Bruce and Rosemary Rideout, Martie and Rob Sinclair, Carolyn Straub and Steve McHenry, Bonnie Stromberg, Jim Swartz, Libby Vincent, Chris Weske, Bill Workman, and Gina and Jeff Zolotar.

Ranger John Verhoeven presented a free annual pass to State Parks within the Monterey District to those individuals who had donated at least 72 hours but fewer than 200 hours (and to couples whose combined number of hours totaled between 72 and 200 hours). Fifty-one passes were distributed this year: Victor Bubbett, Pat Dallam, Bonnie Doran, Ron Fischler, Teddy Goodrich, Rita Gormley, Holly Harper, Mike Harper, Sue Harwager, Lucy Henderson, Pete Henshaw, David Hornby, Ken Hulick, Lee Ingraham, Don Irving, Gary Keller, Greg Lee, Rick Leonard, Daniel Lewis, Greg and Marcia Linden, Margaret Mary McBride, Celia McCormack, Dan McCranie, Steve McHenry, Mike Meyer, Gary Newsome, Matt Pauly, David Perrin, Lois Phillips, Bruce Rideout, Rosemary Rideout, Don Savant, Diane Scariot, Pat Scharfe, Greg Scott, Martie Sinclair, Rob Sinclair, Sharon and Mike Slattery, Stan Soles, Heike and Rainer Stabenow, Susan Stillman, Carolyn Straub, Dan Straus, Kitty Swindle, Nancy Thomas, Carolyn Tucker, Bev VanderWeide, Sandy Voechting, Paul Yellowhorse, Gena Zolotar, and Jeff Zolotar.

John Verhoeven presented the uniformed volunteer committee's Golden Bear award for exceptional service to **Ken Howell**. Ken became a uniformed volunteer in 2004 and has donated more than 200 hours annually since then.

At the end of 2008, he had donated 1,047 hours to the park. Ken has worked at the Coe Backcountry Weekend, and he has led many wildflower walks for the public. He is perhaps best known for his work organizing the Hunting Hollow 5K/10K run/walk event, which is held in June.

The PRA Volunteer of the Year award is given to an individual who has contributed outstanding work in furthering the mission of the association in preserving and enriching Coe Park. This year's award, which was presented by Barbara Bessey, Libby Vincent, Chris Weske, and Stew Eastman, went to **Martie Sinclair**.



PRA Volunteer of the Year, photo by Dick Rawson

Martie became a uniformed volunteer in 1985. By the end of 2008, she had volunteered 5,469 hours, including 655 hours staffing the visitor center. She has spent many hours working at the Coe Backcountry Weekend from the first year in 1993 to the present. For many years, she helped with the mailings of *The Ponderosa*, the board ballots, and mailings for individual park events. Martie also volunteered at the Gilroy Garlic Festival (where proceeds benefited the Pine Ridge Association), and she purchased and served the delicious strawberries at the Mother's Day Breakfast. She has also donated many hours in supporting the uniformed volunteer program.

Bonnie Stromberg announced that **Cynthia Leeder** is the winner of the Coe Backcountry Weekend T-shirt contest. The winning photo was taken on Hobbs Road overlooking the Coe campground, Santa Clara Valley, and the hills to the west. Her photo is posted on the park's website: www.coepark.org/images/backcountry-tshirt-2009.jpg.

A delicious lunch was provided at the end of the meeting. Special thanks to Kitty Swindle, Chere Bargar, Colleen Combes, Jodie Keahey, Linda Keahey, Mary Little, Gary Newsome, Lois Phillips, Pat Scharfe, Diane Scariot, Rosemary Schmidt, Susan Stillman, Jim Swartz, Carolyn Tucker, Bev VanderWeide, and Sandy Voechting. A good time was had by all!

Congratulations to all!

Pine Ridge Association Preliminary Financials, 2008

Strong Increase in Available Cash, Good Progress in Reducing Visitor Center Store Inventory

The following is a PRELIMINARY report of the financial status of the Pine Ridge Association. The final report will be available toward the end of this fiscal quarter, after we have received all information from our investment bank and stock brokers, as well as a closer check on inventory valuations in the visitor center for 2007 and 2008. The results, however, will be close to the numbers shown in this report.

Balance Sheet Details

As of December 31, 2008, our summary balance sheet was as follows, as compared with December 31, 2007 (note: numbers in parentheses represent a negative number):

Assets:	Dec 31, 2008	Dec 31, 2007	Change
Cash and cash equivalents	\$343,553	\$306,609	\$36,944
Accounts receivable	\$0	\$2,620	(\$2,620)
Visitor center store inventory	\$91,535	\$99,986	(\$8,451)
Stocks/bonds	\$88,245	\$89,182	(\$937)
Fixed assets	\$14,332	\$17,915	(\$3,583)
Total assets	\$537,665	\$516,312	\$21,353

Please note the following items:

Our liquid assets (cash plus stocks/bonds) improved by \$36,007

We collected on a past due invoice (\$2,620) during the year that was unpaid in 2007. This was the invoice for maps provided to CAL FIRE during the Lick fire.

We were successful in reducing our inventory at the visitor center, essentially converting inventory to cash. We lost a small amount of money in our long-term investments due to a) slow growth in our large cap stock holdings and b) a significant stock price reduction (\$2,000) in our small cap stock holding.

Significant Items in 2008 Activities

For 2008, we had the following significant financial activities:

Our donations were the highest ever recorded for any year of the PRA, reaching almost \$67,000. This was about \$12,000 higher than 2007.

Our PRA dues collected were about \$6,000, about \$1,400 higher than 2007

Visitor center store sales were down about \$1,000 from 2007 levels, to about \$38,500.

During the year, we made several first time and notable expenses, including:

Hunting Hollow ADA trail development work of about \$6,600

Fire regeneration study costs of about \$3,800

Memorial park bench of \$1,000

Increase in insurance cost of about \$1,400 to a total of \$2,600

Even with these increases in expenditures, totaling almost \$14,000, as well as our "normal" operating expenses, we still posted greater revenue than costs for 2008, AND generated an increase in cash assets of about \$36,000.

The interpretive events/ PRA publishing results were as follows:

EVENT	REVENUE	COST	PROFIT
Mother's Day breakfast	\$3,866	\$3,141	\$725
Hunting Hollow 5K/10K run	\$5,705	\$2,969	\$2,736
Backcountry weekend	\$14,115	\$9,174	\$4,941
T-Fest/raffle	\$4,027	\$3,110	\$917
Coe Connections	\$700	\$0	\$700
Recycling activities	\$490	\$0	\$490
PRA map sales	\$11,841	\$7,105	\$4,736
Other PRA publications	\$6,129	\$3,677	\$2,452
Other visitor center sales	\$20,492	\$12,295	\$8,197

News from Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs

By Laura Dominguez-Yon

A lot of activity has taken place at Gilroy Hot Springs during the last six months. Top priority is security and reducing vandalism, beginning with an increased presence and providing more signage. The process began with Russ Mabery's Roop Family reunion tour in September, and Alex Bacon's Eagle Scout projects to build and install two interpretive signs, plus supervising a cleanup crew in November. PRA members, friends, and volunteers also had a good cleanup day. Paul Stampleman and Dan Faurot of Anzar High School's carpentry class continued with substantial cleanup while replacing the roof on the dressing room structure (which is not a designated historic building). Paul and Dan also arranged for pro bono professional photo documentation of all structures by Steve Hubbard.

Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs (FOGHS) and Norma Watenpaugh, Wynn Ray, and Lowell's Hardware provided funding for the interpretive signs, while State Parks supplied materials for the roof replacement. Special thanks to State Parks Superintendent Eddie Guaracha and his State Parks team for working with each group to help them achieve wonderful results. Ron Wilcher arranged for FOGHS to "adopt-a-bridge" to curb graffiti, with the Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Department supplying the paint.

Eagle Scout project.



Have you seen the beautiful watercolor of the shrine at Gilroy Hot Springs by Mitsi Shine, which is at Henry Coe State Park's visitor center? Mitsi is generously allowing FOGHS to use the image of her painting for promotional brochures and products, and offered to donate proceeds to benefit FOGHS when the painting is auctioned. State Parks funded printing of our first set of membership informational brochures, and PRA volunteer Dan McCranie donated printing costs for our new tri-fold brochure featuring Mitsi's painting.

Save the Date: Saturday, May 16th for our first Gilroy Hot Springs Walk into the Past, featuring period costumes, photo displays, entertainment, and more. Please join us!

We are working on more events that draw attention and attendance to the site—monthly docent guided tours and a special, dramatic presentation about H.K. Sakata, who owned Gilroy Hot Springs from 1938 until 1964.

FOGHS supporters include people who live far away, and others who are not physically able to enjoy other aspects of Henry Coe State Park. We share the vision of preserving the history of and restoring public access to Gilroy Hot Springs.

All FOGHS members automatically become members of the PRA, and current PRA members may discount their FOGHS membership fee by the amount they pay for their PRA membership. Of course, everyone is welcome to help out on improvement activities. Our monthly meetings are the second Tuesday of each month. Sign up for updates and see our links on the PRA website, www.pineridgeassociation.org

Laura Dominguez-Yon, (408) 314

info@FriendsOfGilroyHotSprings.org



Anzar High School carpentry class hard at work.

Volunteer Drive

We're Asking for Your Help

We're always searching for enthusiastic new volunteers for Coe Park's uniformed volunteer program. It makes sense that a great source of new volunteer candidates must surely be you, the people who love the park. Stop and think of your like-minded friends and acquaintances who share your passion for open spaces. You may hike, bike, or ride with them, or you just share a love for the outdoors.

Who among your friends would love to volunteer at Coe Park if only they knew there was such a program, or knew more about it? If you have a name and contact information of someone you think might be interested, contact Ron Erskine at (408) 779 5335 or ronfoxtail@msn.com. As an incentive, we'll give any PRA member a \$20 credit in the visitor center bookstore when your new recruit finishes the volunteer training.

Uniformed volunteer training starts in September, so now is a good time to start thinking about possible candidates. Many thanks for your help.

Spring Class

Open to Coe Volunteers and PRA members

Grasses at Coe Park Getting Started

by Dick Rawson

Saturday, March 14, 2009

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Register by March 6

Learn to identify many of Coe's most conspicuous grasses. The park has about 62 species of grasses, and you can learn to distinguish a dozen or more of them from arm's length or more; no hand lens or microscope needed (but they're helpful).

The park has many more species of colorful spring wildflowers than of grasses, but there's a lot more grass out there than flowering dicots!

We will start in the classroom with talking and slides and some practice recognizing parts of grass plants using weedy grasses from my back yard or along a road.

Bring your hiking shoes for a short hike after lunch. Bring a good hand lens if you can.

Registration ends March 6, or sooner if the class fills up.

Email me at dick.rawson@coepark.org, or
Phone: (408) 621 4042

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the new members listed below. Thank you for your support.

The Beckemeyer Family, Danville
 Laura & Dean Dominguez-Yon, San Jose
 Patricia Clark Gray, Marina
 Marilyn and Gary Heacock, Glendale, AZ
 Ingrid Kreis, San Francisco
 James & Darlene Mabery, Helendale
 Russ & Jodie Mabery, Alamo
 Dorothy McIntire, Middleton, ID
 Joy K. Miyamura, Gilroy
 George Rogers, San Carlos
 Ron Wilchek, Gilroy

We need your help to keep our membership list current and accurate. If you are a paid annual member, your *Ponderosa* mailing label includes an expiration date. (No expiration date for life members and organizations.) If you have any question regarding your membership or to let us know of any change of address, please contact us. Email: membership@pineridgeassociation.org

Snail mail: 9100 East Dunne Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA 95037

Phone: (408) 779 2728

Attention all PRA members!

Beginning this summer (July), *The Ponderosa* will be converted to an online publication that will be available to PRA members at our new website, www.PineRidgeAssociation.org.

This web site is under construction; check it out.

Attention! So you don't miss an issue, please send your email address to: membership@PineRidgeAssociation.org.

Making *The Ponderosa* available online will allow us to include more content, color photos, and other features. It will also save the PRA significant mailing expenses and minimize our carbon footprint. Soon, all current PRA members will receive an email with instructions on how to register on the PRA website. When *The Ponderosa* is published online starting in the summer, you'll receive an email together with a link to the web site's sign-in page so you'll know when each new issue is available. This is why we need your email address, **now!**

If, however, you don't have email and can't otherwise receive *The Ponderosa*, please notify us by mail at the address below, and we will mail you a paper copy.

Pine Ridge Association
Henry W. Coe State Park
9100 East Dunne Avenue
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

Many thanks,

The PRA board
February, 2009



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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 W. 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 editor at: PRAnewsletter@wildblue.net

Deadline for next issue: April 30, 2009

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