The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

Western Pond Turtle in Coyote Creek, acrylic on its shell where a transmitter was attached.
Photo by Joseph Belli

The Western Pond Turtles of Coyote Creek

By Joseph Belli

If you've driven along Gilroy Hot Springs Road to the Hunting Hollow entrance to Henry W. Coe State Park in the past couple of years, you may have noticed a peculiar sight along Roop Road—a man in waders, worn out boots, and a dilapidated straw hat. He won't be gracing the cover of GQ magazine anytime soon. From his neck dangles a harness containing something that might have been taken from the set of Hogan's Heroes, while in his hand he holds a metal object that looks like it belongs on somebody's roof. The metal object is an antenna. Inside the harness is a receiver. That man is me. I'm not searching for buried treasure, trying to contact extraterrestrials, or locate mountain lions. I'm doing something more interesting. I'm tracking turtles.

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The Western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*) is the only fresh water turtle native to the Pacific coast. It is found from Washington south to Baja California, primarily west of the crest of the Cascades and Sierra Nevada. Despite the name, the western pond turtle uses a variety of aquatic habitats, from lagoons and wetlands to lakes, reservoirs, slow-flowing rivers, and streams. Pond turtles have even been found in sewage treatment ponds, and although they're highly aquatic they depend on upland habitats as well. Females nest on land, burying eggs beneath the soil in open, sunny areas well above the flood line. Turtles also spend the winter on land, buried just below a thin layer of leaves or thatch. Their diet is varied, and may contain both animal and vegetable matter, from carrion

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Early Spring 2014

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to algae. No matter what they eat, they must do so while submerged, for Western pond turtles are incapable of feeding on dry land. With long life spans, some may live over fifty years in the wild.

Western pond turtles may have long individual life spans, but as a species they have been on the decline for over a century. They were harvested heavily following the Gold Rush, when great quantities were shipped as food. Later, they were collected to satisfy the demands of the pet trade. But the greatest threat to the Western pond turtle has always been habitat loss. Wetlands have been drained, and rivers and streams have been tapped and channelized, losing their habitat complexity. Dams and reservoirs have also combined to alter habitat for the worse. In some regions, populations have been devastated; in Washington they have become very rare, while in the San Joaquin Valley, where they once numbered in the millions, they exist in small, scattered populations, and in southern California, only a handful of viable populations remain. Today, the stronghold for the species lies in northern California and Oregon. Although the turtle is not listed under the federal Endangered Species Act, further declines could result in such a designation. In California the Western pond turtle is listed as a Species of Special Concern, a level of protection less thorough than an endangered listing, but enough to make it illegal to collect or remove turtles from the wild. In Coe Park they are found throughout the park, even on the drier east side, inhabiting the major streams and numerous ponds. The greatest concentration is found in the Coyote Creek drainage. That's the population we're studying.

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I'm part of a three-person team led by Dr. Jerry Smith of San Jose State University. Dr. Smith has studied numerous species in and around Coe Park: California red-legged frogs, foothill yellow-legged frogs, native fish, even riparian trees such as willows and sycamores. He's studied Western pond turtles for years in the Waddell Creek watershed along the coast north of Santa Cruz. He was curious to see if the turtles in Coe Park behaved similarly to those along the coast, for although the distance between the study sites is not great, the conditions are a world apart: Waddell Creek flows year round through cool redwood forests, while Coyote Creek is in the warmer, drier interior, and ceases flowing in summer. So he decided to conduct a study along Upper Coyote Creek, upstream of Coyote Reservoir, not quite in Coe Park but adjacent to it on neighboring lands managed by the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority.

Scientific studies of Western pond turtles go back over fifty years, but most are relatively recent, within the last decade or two. Such studies typically fall into two categories: movement/habitat use studies and studies of population demographics. The movement/habitat use studies rely on transmitters or GPS transceivers to find out how far turtles travel, which habitats they use, and when they do so. Among other information, these studies reveal the seasonal activity patterns of turtles. Population demographic studies focus on population characteristics such as age makeup, growth rate, gender ratios, and population size. Those studies attempt to capture large numbers of turtles and record various measurements.

Our study sought to do both: record movement/habitat use data as well as population demographics, and do so in an area where they had never been studied before—the inner Coast Range. Prior studies had focused on coastal populations, inland populations further north, and those in the Central Valley. Our study also differed by examining turtles inhabiting an intermittent stream. So far, almost all research on the Western pond turtle has been conducted in permanent bodies of water—lakes, reservoirs, rivers, and streams that flow year round. Yet many turtle populations persist in areas where streams cease flowing or even dry completely in summer. We wanted to see how turtles fared in those conditions.

We began by capturing as many turtles as we could—some by hand, but most in floating hoop-net traps baited with sardines. After capture, we marked them, measured them, noted the gender, and estimated the age. We marked them by filing tiny notches on the perimeter of the shell, each turtle with a different pattern. As a result, we could tell them apart if and when we caught them again. Telling the sexes apart is virtually impossible until the turtles reach a length of about five inches. At that size, visual differences begin to appear. In males, the bottom shell, or plastron, curves inward, while in females it remains flat. Determining age is more challenging. Again, we examine the plastron where each plate, or scute, shows a series of growth rings that are deposited annually, similar to those in trees. Thus the number of rings can show the age of the turtle.

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The Western Pond Turtles of Coyote Creek continued….

This is not a foolproof method, however, for after the age of fifteen the growth rate is so slow that new rings blur together. Those rings often erode earlier if turtles have scraped against rocks, and for many turtles the plastron was simply too worn to count rings. Unfortunately, this aging method cannot tell us the true age of older turtles.

For turtles we wished to track, we attached a transmitter to the top of their shells, using dental acrylic as a bonding agent. We wanted to get a more or less even mix of males and females. Once we got going, I was typically tracking 20-25 turtles one day every week. What we discovered was eye-opening, to say the least.

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I must admit that when Dr. Smith asked if I'd like to track turtles along Coyote Creek I was not terribly enthusiastic about the project. I had a preconceived notion that turtles were not only slow and plodding, but sedentary. Frankly, tracking turtles sounded boring, one degree of separation away from tracking oak trees. I couldn't have been more wrong. On the very first week of tracking, one of our turtles moved nearly half a mile. Such behavior turned out to be commonplace, especially by males in spring, when they travel far and wide to mate with as many females as possible. Females, in contrast, were much less mobile. In fact, the ranges of the least mobile male and the most active female were comparable. The most impressive distance we recorded was that of a male that moved from the vicinity of Hunting Hollow to an area just upstream of Coyote Reservoir, a distance of over two and a half miles in one week! That may be an unofficial record, for no other study I read had a turtle moving so far in such a short period of time. Many people I know don't walk that far in seven days.

We had often wondered what the turtles did when the stream began to dry in summer. Would they head for the larger pools and congregate there? Would they travel uphill and over land to nearby stock ponds, or head en masse to Coyote Reservoir? What they did was leave the stream entirely—even if ample water was still present—and head upland, where they would bury themselves beneath dried leaves. You would think that turtles wouldn't travel very far from the stream to do so, and some turtles did not, remaining close to the bank. Others, however, moved considerably farther, in excess of 100 yards. More impressive than distance was the type of terrain those turtles traveled through. It was not unusual for turtles to ascend steep slopes of fifty or more degrees, to heights of 200 feet, and hunker down in a spot you and I would need to use our hands to climb to. If I pointed to a steep hillside well above the creek festooned with sagebrush and poison oak, and told you there were several turtles there on a sweltering August day, you'd question my sanity.

Once upland, turtles did not always stay put. Usually, they would move short distances every couple of weeks or so, until the weather got cold in December. Then they'd settle down for good before returning to the stream the next year.

Our turtles left the stream early due to drying conditions. Turtles living in rivers and streams that flow all year don't do that—they leave streams in late fall when cold weather and rising waters make conditions too harsh for them. Along Coyote Creek, turtles returned to the stream as early as late January and as late as mid-April. Unlike, say, migratory birds those turtles showed a great deal of individuality in the timing of their movements. Still, our turtles spent over half the year on land, and since they cannot feed unless submerged, that's a long time to fast.

Trapping gave us a wealth of information about the turtles of Coyote Creek. The most basic was an idea of population density. We caught 173 turtles in a couple of miles of Coyote Creek, giving us a general idea that the population level was fair but not particularly high. In high density streams with waters that flow all year, we might have caught over a thousand. If catching even that many turtles was surprising, the gender ratio was even more so, for we caught almost three times as many males as females. Evidently, that's not all that unusual for this species because several other studies have shown a pronounced male bias. Does this really mean that Coyote Creek has three times as many male turtles as females? Probably not. Trapped females attract males. Females may be drawn to traps for the food, but males are drawn to the trap by females. There may well be more male turtles inhabiting Coyote Creek than females, but not by a 3:1 margin.

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The Western Pond Turtles of Coyote Creek continued….

Our measurements also yielded a surprise: adult females were larger than males. This contradicted the results of most other studies, which showed either no discernible size difference between the sexes or had males growing larger. In terms of overall size, Coyote Creek turtles tended to be on the small side compared to other populations. In addition, they grow very slowly. No turtle we remeasured exceeded 10 millimeters in growth in a year, and many grew a scant 2 millimeters or less. In case you're wondering, an inch is about 25 millimeters. Our sample was biased in that we had very little data on hatchlings or one- to three-year old turtles, which certainly grow at greater rates, but we had plenty of juvenile turtles four to six years old, and they grew slowly. I'm guessing the short activity period each year (six or seven months, even less in dry years such as 2013) accounts for both the smaller size and slow growth rate. It stands to reason after all that turtles feeding for only six months a year may not grow as quickly as those feeding for eight or nine months, or all year.

Beyond measurements, we checked our transmittered female turtles for fertility throughout spring and early summer. We did this by extending their hind legs and gently probing the body cavity with our fingers, feeling for eggs, which feel like small lymph nodes. We found that some females did not breed at all, others bred once, and some laid two clutches of eggs. The laying of a second clutch surprised us, but evidently it's not uncommon for the species.

What else did we learn about the turtles of Coyote Creek? On a practical level they're not so easy to find, even with tracking equipment and a couple of helpers. They are masterful at hiding beneath algae and submerged sycamore leaves, among rocks, or in root wads along the bank. On land, they can be equally difficult to find, blending in perfectly with the stones beneath a dense stand of mule fat, or in a woodland beneath the dried leaves of live oaks. Turtles did seem to prefer some stretches of stream to others; we rarely found them in shallow waters with scant vegetation nearby; in contrast, sections with deeper pools, backwaters, and mule fat stands were much more productive. Still, they never ceased to surprise us. Turtles are where you find them.

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What does the future hold for the Western pond turtle? If habitat loss continues, it's likely that turtles will continue to disappear from still more areas where they were once common. Another potential threat to the species is a rather recent one, that posed by the increasing presence of nonnative turtles into California's waterways. Several species such as red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta*) have now established populations in California, released by pet owners no longer willing to care for them. Although it's premature to predict how much of an impact these newcomers will have on Western pond turtles, their presence doesn't bode well. Nonnative turtles may out-compete Western pond turtles for food resources in an ever-dwindling habitat they now share, while the possibility of disease transmission may be an even greater threat. As if that weren't enough, global warming may turn the entire region warmer and drier, and that could cause the Western pond turtle to vanish from areas where suitable habitat still exists. The future for the Western pond turtle is riddled with question marks, and is thus not especially rosy.

In Upper Coyote Creek and in Coe Park, the turtle may be slightly better off. They are if not abundant then fairly common throughout the park. In fact, it's almost certain that there are more turtles in Coe Park now than in the days before the Spaniards settled California because the construction of ponds years ago provided extra habitat and allowed a larger population to exist here than in the absence of ponds. Coe Park's turtles also appear to be safe from whatever threats nonnative turtles may represent because the park's seasonal streams are too meager to support those highly aquatic species, and the ponds are too remote to serve as convenient release sites for disenchanted pet owners. As it stands, the main threats to Coe Park's turtles lie beyond the park's boundaries. A decade or so ago, the Santa Clara Valley Water District proposed constructing a dam at one of several locations just outside the park. The subsequent flooding of Coe Park lands never came to pass but it's possible something similar could rear its ugly head in the future. Meanwhile, the effects of global warming could seriously threaten Coe Park's turtles if rainfall levels diminish and stream flows decrease. Given present conditions, Coyote Creek provides a habitat that is only marginal; with even less water and a shorter span of time per year with water present, the Coyote Creek of the future may not be able to support Western pond turtles. Hopefully, that scenario won't happen.

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The Western Pond Turtles of Coyote Creek continued….

It's May 1972 and a little boy and his grandparents are having a picnic. Excited and restless, the boy wanders down to the stream nearby and begins to explore. He marvels at the abundance of life in the stream; he's never seen anything like it. He's trying to catch tadpoles when he notices a turtle on shore, among stones. He gently picks it up, inspects it, then places it back in the shallows where it soon swims off. What a place! The boy is happy. He believes life will always be like this. His is a simple, carefree world, and he knows little about change, loss, death, and extinction. He wants to come back to this place. He has no idea that it will be almost forty years before he does. The stream is Coyote Creek. The turtle was a Western pond turtle. That little boy was me.

That turtle was the first I ever saw outside of a tank. Forty years later, I found myself studying that same species along the very same banks I explored all those years ago. I wonder—is it possible, given their long life spans, that maybe, just maybe, one of those 173 turtles we caught and measured (and possibly tracked) was the same turtle I saw so very long ago? Probably not; after all, a lot can happen in forty years and just because a creature can live a long time doesn't mean it will. Still, it's possible, and the possibility of such reconnections is what makes places such as Coe Park treasured assets. There's something of incalculable value in a place where, in today's hectic, ever-changing, and diminishing world, you can still see some of the same wild things forty years later, be they Ponderosa pines, wildflower fields, golden eagles, or Western pond turtles. Come to think of it, those tiny notches we incised on the shells of those turtles are pretty distinct, and durable too. I know how to read them. If all goes well, I might just in return to the stream the spring of 2052 and see how my old friends are doing. Who's with me?

A note about the transmitters attached to the pond turtles' shells: The transmitters will probably stay on the turtles' shells indefinitely because the dental acrylic we used as a bonding agent works like cement. If the transmitters did come off, it would probably be due to some force exerted at a pressure point—for instance, when we removed transmitters at the end of the study, we used the tip of a pocket knife to gently work along the edge of the acrylic. After a short time, the entire transmitter would pop off intact. Similarly, if a raccoon gnawed on it, the unit would also pop off, and we had several instances where somehow, a unit popped off. Our main concern was the battery life of the transmitters because they were guaranteed for no more than one year, so we needed to capture the turtles and replace transmitters when we wanted to follow a turtle for more than one year.

Joseph has been a Coe Park volunteer since 1994. He studied Western pond turtles for his Master's degree at San Jose State University and is writing up his thesis.

Western pond turtle.
Photo by Sue Dekalb.

The Loneliest Manzanita

By Winslow Briggs

Coe Park is the comfortable home for two very large species of manzanita: Big Berry (*Arctostaphylos glauca*) and Eastwood's (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*) manzanitas. These two species grow side by side along Pine Ridge, Middle Ridge, and Blue Ridge, and are easy to tell apart simply by looking at the youngest twigs. For *A. glauca*, they are completely smooth, and for *A. glandulosa* they are hairy. If there has been a fire, they are even easier to tell apart. *A. glandulosa* sprouts enthusiastically from the swollen base of the trunks and reappears, hale and hearty, with the first rains. *A. glauca* can reproduce only from seeds and it may take a couple of years for the seedlings to poke up out of the scorched ground.

Former Coe Park ranger Barry Breckling was certain that a third species was hiding somewhere on Blue Ridge north of the Hobbs Road intersection. He provided Dick Rawson and me with approximate coordinates and we embarked on a Manzanita hunt. To our delight, we came on it right where Barry said it would be—*Arctostaphylos manzanita*. It was on the southwest side of the Blue Ridge Road and hence escaped the fury of the Lick fire.

What Barry hadn't mentioned was that it was huge! We returned subsequently with a 100-foot tape to get some of its dimensions. From the top its crown was somewhat oval in shape with one axis 32 feet long and the other 38 feet 11 inches long. We triangulated its height and determined that it was approximately 56 feet high. The tape measure stretched around its base proclaimed its circumference at 8 feet 3 inches.

The smooth bark was a rich dark chocolate brown and the leaves were a dramatic dark green alongside the gray-green leaves of its two sister species. Its leaves were also considerably narrower. Taxonomists have distinguished a total of six subspecies, two of which are reported in the Bay Area and until this giant shrub flowers and sets fruit, we'll have to remain uncertain as to whether it is ssp. *laevigata* or ssp. *manzanita*. After making the measurements and taking photos we wandered along the ridgetop in both directions in a futile effort to find another specimen. Apparently they are there—or at least were there—as there are a few collection records of *Arctostaphylos manzanita* on Blue Ridge. They may have been taken out by the Lick Fire. This big fellow is obviously pretty lonely.

The Loneliest Manzanita.
Photo by Winslow Briggs.

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Park Events and Information

Mark your calendars—important dates and other announcements

Also visit www.coepark.org for more information about all activities.

Rain Coats and Rubber Boots (or shorts and T-shirts depending on the weather)

Saturday, March 8, 10.30am to 1.30pm at the Hunting Hollow entrance, rain or shine. We'll hike down the creek, scavenger hunt, perhaps enjoy a boat race (toy boats furnished) or a duck race. Bring a picnic lunch. For more information, please call Chere at 408-683-2247 or Kitty at 408-842-6215, or visit www.coepark.org.

Wildflower Ride (bring your own horse)

Sunday, April 13, Hunting Hollow entrance, 10.00am. Contact Chere at 408-683-2247 or Kitty at 408-842-6215, or visit www.coepark.org.

Ranch Day

Saturday, May 17, 10:00am-3:00pm at Hunting Hollow. (Rain date June 7). For more information, please call Chere at 408-683-2247 or Kitty at 408-842-6215 or visit www.coepark.org.

Bat Boxes in Hunting Hollow

If you've hiked or ridden down Hunting Hollow recently, you might have noticed some activity as park staff and volunteers work to install bat boxes. The team hopes to have the boxes installed by early spring so the bats can check them out when they return in April. When the bat boxes are inhabited, we'll be organizing interpretative programs starting in the summer to educate people about how useful these creatures of the night are. The programs will provide fascinating facts and dispel the myths about bats that make people fearful of them.

We'll provide more details in the next issue of The Ponderosa.

Trail Work Days

Saturday, March 22

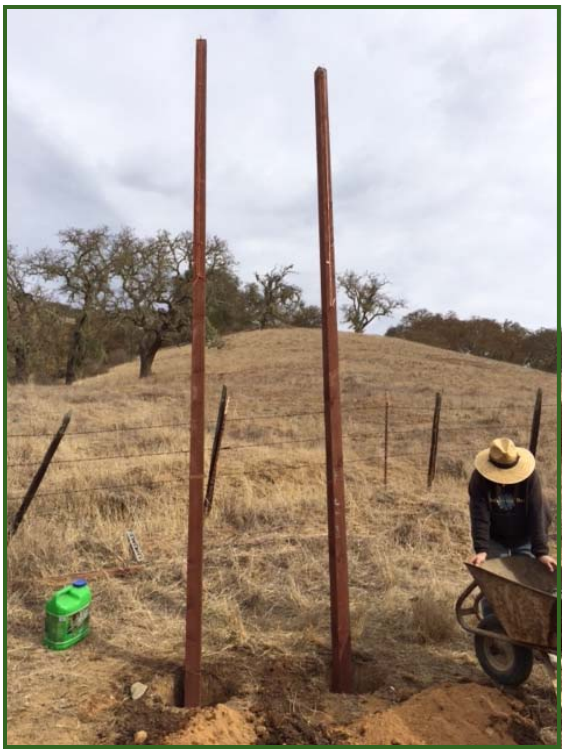
Meet at Hunting Hollow, 8.00am, for hot drinks and donuts. We will leave the parking lot at 8.30am for the work site. For more information, please call Chere at 408-683-2247 or Kitty at 408-842-6215 or visit www.coepark.org.

More Trail Work Days

Lend a hand every second Saturday at 9.00am for trail work. Venues will be posted on the Coe Park website nearer the time. For more information visit www.coepark.org or email Ranger Cameron Bowers at cameron.bowers@parks.ca.gov.

Fungus hike

In the last issue of The Ponderosa, we described a fungus hike we were hoping to offer at the park. Given the complete lack of rain, there's a complete lack of fungus, so we'll reschedule the fungus hike next winter or spring when we hope there'll be lots and lots of rain and lots and lots of fungi.



Chere Bargar starting to construct the bat box near the trail to Fish Pond.

Photo by Sue Dekalb.

News from the Board of the Pine Ridge Association

By Ron Erskine

The board of directors of the Pine Ridge Association met on Tuesday, January 14, at the Gilroy Library. Election results for the board of directors were announced as follows: Diana Goodwin, Steve McHenry, and Ron Erskine were re-elected to the board. Diana was re-elected president, Ron Erskine as vice-president, and Steve McHenry was appointed secretary.

Prior to the board election, Peter Verbica had stepped forward as a candidate for the board. There were now four candidates for three board vacancies. Due to Peter's unique connection to the park (he is Henry W. Coe, Jr.'s great-grandson) and impressive resumé, the board was anxious to find a way to seat him. Cynthia Leeder expressed her desire to continue as treasurer but to step down from the board, which created a vacancy. Peter was appointed to the board to complete Cynthia's term. See details below.

The main topic of the January 14 meeting was a review of the estimated income statement for 2013. Despite the return of $30,077 from the Coe Park Preservation Fund, significant grants and expenditures for the year resulted in a $12,538 loss. A $27,000 grant (matched by the state) for repairs to halt decay of dangerously fragile Gilroy Hot Springs cabins, grants for benches, and increased insurance costs were the main costs resulting in the loss. In addition to discussing ways to lower costs and the need to more carefully consider Department of Parks and Recreation requests for funds not at the heart of our charter, the board discussed possible additional funding ideas such as a year-end giving drive.

The scheduled PRA board meetings for 2014 are as follows (all Tuesdays): March 11, May 13, July 8, September 9, and November 11. Meetings are held from 6:30 to 8:30 in the meeting room of the Gilroy Library. All PRA members are welcome to attend. If you would like to place something on the agenda for a board meeting, email Diana Goodwin at diana@diacomm.com prior to the meeting.

Introducing Peter Coe Verbica

It is unusual for the PRA board to have a member outside the population of volunteers and PRA members that most of us are familiar with. We are excited to introduce Peter to you and to welcome him to the board.

Peter grew up doing ranch chores on the San Felipe Ranch just north of Coe Park. He went to school in Morgan Hill, then Bellarmine, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara University School of Law, and MIT. Peter currently works at Merrill Lynch in the Wealth Management Group's Silicon Valley complex. Peter has written a collection of cowboy poems called "A Key to the Grove and other Poems," which is available from Amazon. Peter expressed to the board his desire to reconnect with the lands he knew so well growing up. When you see Peter at the park, say hello. He'll appreciate it.

Grizzly Falls from the west. Photo by Mike Meyer who was clinging tenaciously to a very steep hillside when he took it.

Wouldn't it be nice to see that much water coming over the falls now!

Indian Camp

By Mike Meyer

I went up the mountain climbing along the face of it from the creek to the top, about four miles. Near the top the road curved in a horseshoe and on the low edge the mountain dropped steeply in thick dry grass and there were oaks and a little used trail that cut through the grass at an angle and I went down the trail.

Through a patch of chaparral and then the tilt of the land rounded and fell away on both sides and formed a ridge coming up from below. The trail petered out under the oaks but someone had wired a boar's jaw bone and teeth to a tree limb at the place where it turned. I went off the ridge back and down the north face and could follow the trail again. The trail went under oaks and in the drainages, under bays, and you kicked the dry grass as you walked and the grass and fallen leaves broke and crackled under you.

The trail went up a little channel then crossed over clean grey rock and back down the other side. I went across a broad meadow with a fallen and broken oak, the grass yellow in the sun, then went down another face and across another meadow, always heading down.

About a mile down, I sat on a rock ledge at the creek and ate and rested. A sycamore blocked the sun and the leaves were green and yellow, bright and cheery under sunlight. I ate cheese and bread and had a couple nuts and drank water. There was no water and the sand was white and the boulders were the white of dry algae. Then I crossed the dry bed and went on a path up the creek under heavy tree cover.

There was a still pool, the water green and thick, like a soup, covered with a film of pollen. The pool was low, no more than 18 inches. There had been no rain to speak of for six or seven months. It seemed there should have been a few hold-out sucker fish, but there were none.

On a land bench at the Big Canyon opening was a small flat clearing in the trees. The great hill of Cordoza Ridge came down thick with trees and the sun came through the trees on the hill. I sat in the dappled light with the trees all around, like at home, sat on the dirt the color of charcoal and the grass and the fallen leaves. There was a grinding stone under some dead branches. I looked across the clearing through the thick shade and imagined a girl kneeling and a woman under the trees beyond the clearing and somewhere nearby two men with faces smeared with white ash hiding above a deer run.

I watched some cloud wisps clumped like a wad of grass in the deep sky. A sycamore with the sun in it was yellow and green and the yellow held the sun and was sharp. Each thing had me, and I sat a long time noticing the tree and then the cloud. Then I spread a thick shirt on the dirt and lay with my head on the pack and fell asleep.

David Hornby

David Hornby died on January 24th, losing a battle against cancer. He volunteered at Coe Park for over 20 years. He led nature hikes and cooked at the TarantulaFest and on volunteer ride-alongs. Dave was a gourmet cook and in recent years he judged major barbecue competitions. I always enjoyed talking about food with him and sometimes cooked alongside him at his house. In earlier years Dave often rode his bike up to the park, not an easy feat. I had a picture of Dave on the corkboard above my desk. Someone had caught him in very grubby clothes; he was probably working on some earthy Coe project. He had a broad smile in the photo and someone had written below it, "will work for food." I'll always remember Dave for his easy, good humor and his passion for great food. There will be no service for David at his request, but he said that donations could be made on his behalf to the Monterey Bay Aquarium (http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/).

Barry Breckling

PRA New Members

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

We need your help to keep our membership list current and accurate. If you have any questions regarding your membership or to let us know of any change of address, please contact us. If you have chosen to receive *The Ponderosa* electronically and, for some reason, it is undeliverable, we will send the next issue via USPS.

Gregory Edwards, Half Moon Bay
Joe Fabiny, Morgan Hill
Larry Fitterer, Morgan Hill
Dennis Hilgenberg, San Jose
Marilyn Lang, Saratoga
Kimberly & David Leiser, Morgan Hill
Nancy Moore, Morgan Hill
David Newton, Boston, Mass.
James Pearson, Gilroy
Eric Petersen, Salinas
Chris Rife, Redwood City
Pearle Salters
(apologies for misspelling your name in the last issue)

Email: membership@coepark.net
US mail: 9100 East Dunne Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA 95037
Phone: 408-779-2728

The Loneliest Manzanita continued….

Arctostaphylos manzanita on Blue Ridge.
Photo by Winslow Briggs.

News from Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs

by Laura Domínguez-Yon

The new year is the time to reflect on past accomplishments and look toward future goals. So, what has been accomplished at Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs (GYHS)? And what do we hope to accomplish this year? Here's a summary.

Our accomplishments:

- Vandalism reduced
- Historic structures protected
- Increased public awareness
- Increased number of visitors
- Funds raised
- Increased park volunteer participation

You can find more details at www.GilroyYamatoHotSprings.org. There's also a link to the site from www.coepark.net.

Given the reduced resources available from the Department of Parks and Recreation, GYHS needs to become self sufficient when offering activities on site. Therefore we need to procure equipment and additional volunteers to fill in the gaps.

Our winter 2014 wish list

The following items will make it possible for fundraising events to continue to provide the maintenance and support services so we can continue to protect, preserve, and restore public access to GYHS:

- 10 folding picnic tables
- Folding chairs, heavy duty and durable
- Folding tables, heavy duty and durable
- Popup 10x10 canopies
- Popup 10x20 tents
- Portable generator
- Outdoor heaters
- Small cargo trailer

Please contact us if you can help with any of these donations. See www.GilroyYamatoHotSprings.org for more information.

Volunteers contribute many different talents and ideas to help us accomplish our goals. Gael Troughton is developing HO-scale miniature model kits to introduce us to a worldwide market of miniature train enthusiasts. Evelyn Pellen, watercolorist, donated the license to use her images on note cards. Mitsi Shine donated the license to use her beautiful watercolor of the GYHS shrine.

Our thanks to all GYHS supporters for your many contributions. We wouldn't be where we are without you.

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

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

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The Ponderosa is a quarterly publication of the Pine Ridge Association. The PRA's mission is to enhance and enrich the public's experience at Henry W. Coe State Park through education and interpretation. Articles and artwork relating to the natural history, history, and management of the park are welcome. Also, interested in volunteering? Email Jim Wright, jimtina@yahoo.com.

Please send submissions and ideas to the editor at: PRAnewsletter@wildblue.net.

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