

# The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter  
Henry W. Coe State Park



Fall 2011



Photo by Cynthia Leeder

## New Volunteer Training

By Libby Vincent

Nineteen new volunteers joined this year's new volunteer training program and have completed the four days of required class training:

Christine Amber	Chris Kangas	Philip Strenfel
Shae Collinge	Paul Liebenberg	Travis Taylor
Dale Combs	Ed Martini	Chris Voci-Nam
Brian Deutscher	Kelly Shea Montelaro	Dave Waldrop
Sue Dekalb	Lori Oleson	James Williams
Charles Fry	Tina Schiffman	Don Wong
Nancy Hutson		

Two days of training gave new volunteers an understanding of the park and the uniformed volunteer training program, introduced them to the visitor center, campground, and ranch buildings, provided the basics of the physical environment of the park, the basics of the major plant and animal communities of the park, the basics of the human and ranch history of the park, and radio training. Volunteers also hiked the most commonly used trail loop in the park—Corral Trail, Springs Trail, and Forest Trail. Trainers and trainees enjoyed the two-day ridealong in almost perfect weather in October. Highlights? Not easy to pick one, but among

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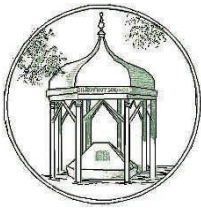
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## News from Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs

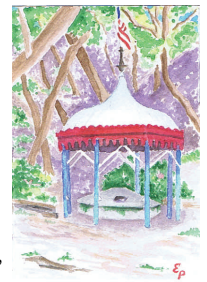
By Laura Dominguez-Yon

This has certainly been a very busy year for FoGHS with regular guided tours, full moon campouts, two public events, volunteer work days, members picnicking and soaking, and transitioning to better focus on protection, preservation, and restoration.

Did you visit our Travel Through Time event on October 15th? The weather was perfect! New attendees were pleased to see learn about the history of Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs (GYHS), and returning visitors were amazed to see the improvements. It was a wonderful surprise to see Norman Kato, Winn and Diane Robinson, Ted Kubota, Michelle and Larry Owen, Pauline Kitaji Wada, and many more who have ties to GYHS. Welcome back, and come again soon!

It's amazing how a few enthusiastic individuals can accomplish so much. Many thanks to Cal Power, Cal Fire, Lou's BBQ, and Gael Troughton for their exhibits; Michael Gaither for sharing his music and songs; Eric Anninger and members of the Horseless Carriage Club for visiting in their vintage vehicles; the dads and scouts of Troup 792 for handling admissions, parking, litter patrol, safety, and tear-down; tour guides Matt Bischoff, Connie Rogers, Morgan and Jason Mabery, Miriam Taba, Alan Hummel, Tim Lantz, and Paul Nam; publicity and information co-chairs Karen Pogue, Rhonda Pellin, with Barbara Bottini; Russ and Jody Mabery, Joe and Jeanne Filice; logistics, Laura and Dean Yon with Stephanie Lee.

Have you seen the new note cards featuring original watercolors by Evelyn Pellin? All proceeds support our efforts to protect, preserve, and restore GYHS. We'll have ordering instructions on the website (<http://friendsofgilroyhotsprings.org/>) soon. Thank you, Evelyn, for contributing your talent to our mission!



Dean and I have camped at GYHS on St. Patrick's Day, Easter, my birthday, his birthday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Fourth of July, my son's birthday, Labor Day, my daughter's birthday, her son's birthday, and Columbus Day. Dean teases me about camping for our twentieth anniversary, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, too, to make it a perfect year. No! I'm letting Paul Nam and Paul Liebenberg and the trail maintenance volunteers finish the year for us, thank you. My preferred vacation is at a five-star resort. GYHS was a five-star resort in its heyday, but it's rustic now, the thought of snakes and tarantulas has scared off a few potential visitors and, frankly, I'm tired of mosquitoes and ticks.

However, I recently heard something important about the role GYHS can play in helping people enjoy Coe Park. During a recent elementary school tour, a couple of the mothers admitted that they were "not the outdoorsy type, not into hiking or dirt," but they were pleasantly surprised that the drive to GYHS was beautiful and the hike was relaxing. They were also appreciative of the peek into a small part of the Coe Park treasures that GYHS makes possible, and they are enthusiastic about learning more about Coe Park and supporting it. For all those who are not already familiar with the park's outdoor activities, or those who have physical limitations, GYHS is an important portal that must be maintained.



## Annual Pine Ridge Association Raffle at the Fall Tarantulafest and BBQ

By Ann Briggs

On Saturday, October 1, 2011 the annual raffle took place during the Fall Tarantulafest and BBQ. We are indebted to the generous donors of the prizes:

- Gilroy Gardens Theme Park for donating a single-day admission ticket for two
- An anonymous donor who donated a lovely crocheted bedspread for a lucky winner
- Dan McCranie for donating a gift certificate for a three-course dinner for two at Ladera Grill in Morgan Hill.



We thank Ranger John Verhoeven and Ranger Cameron Bowers who donated a ridealong tour of the backcountry with them, lunch included. We also thank the PRA volunteer organizers who donated free admissions to the annual Coe Park Hunting Hollow 10K fun run and walk, Mother's Day Breakfast, and Backcountry Weekend.

This year for the first time we included a silent auction in the festivities. The items to be auctioned off included:

- Two tickets to a Giant's game together with one night at the nearby Hotel Vitale
- A giclee print of Pacheco Peak by Renee Angela Felice
- An original print and a copy of the book "The High Sierra of California" by Tom Killion
- A one-year membership in the Kirigin Cellars wine club
- A two-night stay at the Granlibakken Resort and Spa near Lake Tahoe

Bidding was active, everyone enjoyed themselves, and the silent auction was a big success.



Nature hike along the Corral Trail

Photo by Kaela Henricksen

Nature hikes were offered throughout the day and were very popular.



A tarantula photographed by Cynthia Leeder in the Coe Park parking lot



Photo by Kaela Henricksen

## Coe Park Prescribed Burn, October 2011

By Chris Weske

On October 18th, State Parks and Cal Fire conducted a prescribed burn on Middle Ridge, which was last exposed to fire in a prescribed burn in 1989. State Parks and Cal Fire crews were assisted by personnel and equipment from the Spring Valley Volunteer Fire Department, the San Jose Fire Department, and the Milpitas Fire Department. Researchers from NASA, the U.S. Forest Service, and San Jose State University were also involved.

The week before the burn, a U.S. Forest Service team from Seattle arrived to establish test plots in the grasslands off Hobbs Road. They determined the amount of grass that would be available to be consumed by the fire, and its moisture content. A team from San Jose State University then installed instruments that would measure the heat output of the burn. On the day of the burn, with a NASA researcher from the Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland on site, a NASA plane took off from the Dryden Flight Research Center in Palmdale, California. The fire crews timed the burn so that the fire would pass through the test plots as the plane was overhead. The plane, carrying an Autonomous Modular Scanner, made two passes over the burn as a NASA polar orbiting satellite was also passing overhead carrying a Moderate-Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS). With known fire intensity on the ground, researchers will be better able to interpret the images from instruments on planes and satellites that are used to monitor wildfires.



Prescribed burn on Middle Ridge  
Photo by Jim Suero, State Parks

## Time to Run for the PRA Board

The Pine Ridge Association will hold its annual election for board directors in December. The terms of **two** directors expire at the end of this year. Now is the time to prepare your candidacy statement and send it to Winslow R. Briggs, Secretary, Pine Ridge Association, 480 Hale Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301, or email [wrbcoe@att.net](mailto:wrbcoe@att.net).

Any association member may run for the board. A member may also nominate another PRA member. To do this, send Winslow a short statement explaining why you believe the person would be a good board member, and he will contact your nominee to ask the person to consider running.

The most important qualification for a board member is a willingness to attend board meetings and to participate in carrying out tasks for the association. Meetings typically take place every other month on weeknights. The term of office is three years. If a board member is also a uniformed Coe Park volunteer, meetings and board-related activities count toward volunteer hours.

We use the special nonprofit bulk-rate mailing permit for sending out association-related materials. However, this means that some members might not receive their newsletters or other materials for a couple of weeks after they are mailed. So that the ballots can be distributed (and received by all members) in a timely fashion, it is important that all candidacy statements be postmarked on or before **Friday, November 25<sup>th</sup>**. Please send your statements to Winslow at the address above. (If you plan to nominate someone else, please do so at least two weeks earlier.) Your statement might be a few paragraphs long and might contain information such as how long you have been a PRA member, why you became interested in Coe Park, ways that you have served the park or other volunteer activities in which you have benefited the public, any special qualifications or experience that you have, and specific plans that you have for improving the park as a board member.

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## Nominations Sought for the Volunteer of the Year Annual Award

Each year at the PRA annual meeting held in February, an award is presented to an individual (or individuals) whose efforts have preserved and enriched Henry W. Coe State Park. It is not necessary that the recipient be a member of the Pine Ridge Association or be a uniformed volunteer in the park. The recipient receives an engraved plaque, and the person's name is added to the large plaque that is displayed at the visitor center.

Two unofficial sets of criteria have been used to guide the selection process:

- Leadership: scope, motivation, and initiative
  - Involvement: scope, altruism, and time contribution
  - Asset growth: recruiting, fund-raising, and contributions
  - Ideas/projects: creative, innovative, follow-through with personal implementation
  - Performance: past, sustained, future expectations
  - Measurable accomplishments: visible results
- Has had a beneficial effect on the park's resources and activities
  - Has sought responsibility and has acted as a leader
  - Has leveraged efforts into multiplicative effects by organizing the activities of others

We are asking PRA members to supply nominations for this award by the end of November. If there is someone you would like to nominate, please write a short paragraph of reasons why that person should be considered and send it to the PRA President, Paul Nam, 29863 Portal Plaza, Cupertino, CA 95014 or email at [vochinam@yahoo.com](mailto:vochinam@yahoo.com). A committee of the PRA board of directors will collect additional information about the activities of your nominee and will make a selection.

## News from Coe Park

By Paul Nam

There are approximately 2,000 Coe Park maps left for sale, so in 2012 work will begin on the next revision.

The springs committee has identified the problems with the plumbing of Live Oak Spring and has made some of the necessary repairs. More work is needed. The spring provides water for Pacheco Camp.

Chris Weske is working with the San Jose State University Meteorology Department to install a Remote Automated Weather Station on Cordoza Ridge. There are nearly 2,200 of these interagency weather stations strategically located throughout the United States. The stations monitor weather and provide weather data that assists land management agencies with a variety of projects such as monitoring air quality, rating fire danger, and providing information for research purposes. (Editor's note: Chris is working on an article about the installation of the weather station on Cordoza Ridge to be published in the next issue of *The Ponderosa*.)

Park staff sought suggestions on places in the park to place picnic tables. Tables will be placed on the dam end of Coit Lake, at the top of the Jim Donnelly Trail at Steer Ridge Road, and at the end of Hunting Hollow adjacent to the Wagon Road junction. A picnic table has been installed at the 1,521 foot elevation on the Jim Donnelly Trail.

Discussions are ongoing to define specific locations for tule removal at Mississippi, Coit, and Kelly Lakes to provide more shoreline access and increase opportunities for fishing and swimming. Discussions are also ongoing to define the annual maintenance of several access points at each lake.

The speaker for the 2012 Pine Ridge Association annual meeting will be Amy Lauterbach of the Santa Clara Audubon Society. Her talk will be "Birds in Coe Park."

Sector Superintendent Eddie Guaracha has proposed a pilot program of special guided trips be organized in 2012 for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and vehicular access to the park. Ron Erskine is chairing a committee planning these trips, which will be offered to promote the park, increase the number of visitors, generate modest revenue, and provide more access to enjoy the backcountry.

Sector Maintenance Chief Randy Neufeld has approved the repair of the pond on the Bowl Trail that's about to slide down the hill taking the trail with it. Repair work has begun, further work awaits the right conditions, and volunteers. Construction of the Jim Donnelly Trail continues; the new trail alignment is open for use but is not yet complete. The old section of trail below 1,500 feet is now closed and the steep hillside will be restored to natural vegetation. Cross Canyon Trail, Willson Peak Trail, Domino Pond Trail, Kelly Cabin Canyon Trail, and others are also on the list of trails needing repair.

See the PRA calendar on page 7 for trail work dates. Work goes ahead rain or shine.

## The PRA Calendar

Mark your calendars—important dates

### Saturday, November 26

Thanksgiving potluck for all friends of Coe Park, 3:00pm at the white barn, park headquarters. For more information and to sign up, contact Rosemary and Bruce Rideout on 408-847-5729 or email [rideout@garlic.com](mailto:rideout@garlic.com).

### Saturday, February 4, 2012

PRA annual meeting at the Community Center in Morgan Hill located at the corner of Monterey Road and East Dunne Avenue. Public parking is available in the parking lot immediately behind the facility. Coffee and bagels will be served starting at 8:15 a.m., and the meeting will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. The speaker for the 2012 meeting will be Amy Lauterbach of the Santa Clara Audubon Society. Her talk will be "Birds in Coe Park."

After the meeting, the volunteer committee will serve lunch.

For more details visit [www.coepark.org](http://www.coepark.org) in the new year.

### Trail Work Schedule

**Saturday, December 3**, 9:00am, visitor center, Ponderosa Trail and Frog Lake

**Saturday, December 10**, 9:00am, Hunting Hollow

**Sunday, December 11**, 9:00am (½ day), Hunting Hollow

**Saturday, January 14**, 9:00am, Hunting Hollow

**Sunday, January 15**, 9:00am, Hunting Hollow

Cross Canyon, Willson Peak, Domino Pond, Kelly Cabin Canyon, and other trails have specific documented repairs that need to be addressed. Actual work performed will depend upon conditions. We work rain or shine. For more information contact Paul Nam at [vocinam@yahoo.com](mailto:vocinam@yahoo.com) or Rob Glover at [wrglover@yahoo.com](mailto:wrglover@yahoo.com).

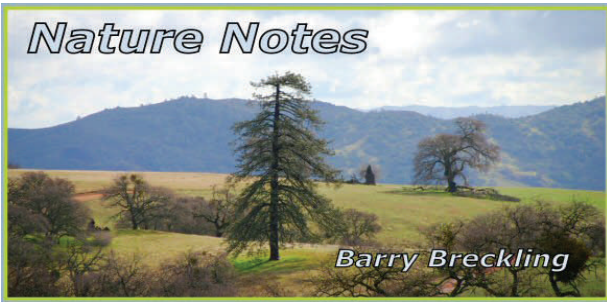
## New Members

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

Christine Amber & Brian Deutscher, Gilroy  
 Brian Chaffin, Monte Sereno  
 George & Nancy Fohner, 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, electronic mailing, or organizations.) If you have any questions regarding your membership or to let us know of any change of address, please contact us:

Email: [membership@coepark.org](mailto:membership@coepark.org)  
 US mail: 9100 East Dunne Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA 95037  
 Phone: 408-779-2728



## Corvids of Coe

Jays, magpies, crows and ravens, all in the Corvid family, are considered to be the smartest of all birds. In the book *Bird Brains* by Candace Savage, you can learn about the remarkable intelligence of this group.

Five members of the family are found in Coe Park. One of the most noticeable, both visually and verbally, is the Steller's Jay, who may be a stellar bird but is actually named after a person. On a 1741 Russian expedition led by the Danish explorer Vitus Bering, Georg Wilhelm Steller, a Bavarian naturalist, discovered the jays on an island off Alaska. Steller's Jays are good mimics (as are many Corvids) and do a very good job of imitating Red-tailed Hawks.



The other Jay in the park is the Western Scrub Jay. Although they are blue, they should not be called Blue Jays as this name is reserved for the jay common to the eastern half of the United States. Scrub Jays, with their smooth rounded heads, prefer areas of brush and oak woodlands while the Steller's Jays, with their head-topped crest, prefer coniferous forests. Park headquarters is a great place to see both, with its mix of habitats. Both jays eat a wide variety of foods, one of their favorites being acorns which they bury for later use. They are able to remember thousands of the location where they've buried nuts, but they never retrieve all their caches, leaving some that will sprout into new trees. Acorns can plant themselves but not uphill. Jays do the job of "uphill planting".



When I lived at Coe, we had a Scrub Jay named Jack who would come into our house (we often left doors open). He would steal peanuts (well, I guess we may have left some out for him) and on many occasions, he would plant them throughout the house in house plants. We often had quiet little chortling conversations with him.

American Crows are not common in the park, but at certain times of the year they can be seen commuting in flocks down to the Santa Clara Valley in the morning and commuting back east into the canyons of the park in the afternoon.



Common Ravens are also not common in the park but are seen occasionally along windy ridge tops. They seem to like harsh places such as deserts, high mountains, and rugged coastal areas. Most of the time you see ravens in pairs (they mate for life). You might see small family groups after their young have left the nest. On a few occasions I've seen larger flocks heading south along Blue Ridge in the fall. Ravens are large, about the same size as Red-tailed Hawks, and they act more like raptors in their flight, with acrobatic aerial displays. You might have difficulty telling crows from ravens so here are a few hints for telling them apart. Ravens mainly soar, while crows fly "as the crow flies"—straight. Mostly you see ravens in pairs and crows in flocks. Ravens have larger heads and heavier bills. Ravens have wedged-shaped tails,





## Corvids of Coe continued.....

crows have rounded tails. Ravens are considered to be very intelligent. Some have preformed as well as monkeys in psychological tests.

Dressed to the nines, Yellow-billed Magpies are attired in black and white tuxedos with very long iridescent blue and green tails. Their range is limited to the Great Central Valley and Coast Ranges from the Bay Area south. Their more wide-spread black-billed cousins, the American Magpies, are found east of the Sierra Nevada.



There was one other Corvid that visited the park one winter, a Clark's Nutcracker. It hung around the park headquarters for several days. They spend most of their time in high elevation subalpine habitats where individual birds collect and stash tens of thousands of pine nuts in thousands of locations...and remember where most of these nuts were stashed!



## New Volunteer Training Continued....

them are watching Dave Raiman's signal mirror at the fire station on Copernicus flashing us on Bear Mountain 12 miles away, the hike down Pacheco Creek to Pacheco Falls, the feast at Pacheco Camp courtesy of Paul Yellowhorse and many helpers, and Bruce Rideout becoming the trespassing cow at Coit Lake.

The new volunteers have now signed up for specialized training in working in the visitor center, foot patrol, trail maintenance, the mounted assistance unit, bicycle patrol, or springs maintenance. We look forward to seeing everyone graduate at the PRA annual meeting in February. In the meantime, hope to see you at the Coe pot-luck Thanksgiving, which will take place in the white barn on Saturday 26 November.



The Trespassing Cow  
Photo by Sue Dekalb

Training with Ranger John Verhoeven  
Photos by Cynthia Leader



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Cynthia Leeder  
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Jim Wright

*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 Linda Keahey, [jodielindak@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jodielindak@sbcglobal.net)

Please send submissions and ideas to the editor at: [PRAnewsletter@wildblue.net](mailto:PRAnewsletter@wildblue.net).

**Deadline for the next issue: January 31, 2012**

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