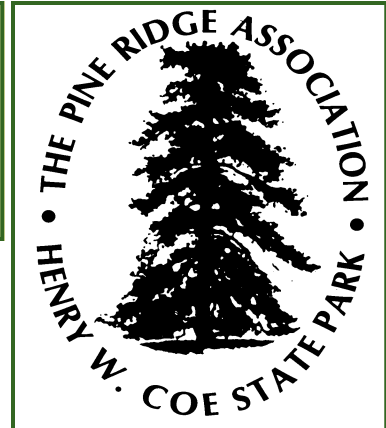


The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park



Coe Backcountry Weekend 2011

By Diana Maloney

Spectacular weather brought out the largest Coe Backcountry Weekend attendance on record, around 1,000 visitors—backpackers, hikers, equestrians, car campers, mountain bikers, and fishing enthusiasts. A special delight this year was that many families with young children participated.



Morning in camp, high on the divide between north-flowing Orestimba Creek and south-flowing Pacheco Creek. Photo by Rosemary Rideout.

Interpretive programs were very well attended. Some highlights

- The new Burra Burra geology hike was very popular with 23 visitors joining volunteers Tom Conrad and Cynthia Leeder while geologist John Karachewski described the complex and fascinating geology of the park.
- Don Savant, assisted by Jodie and Linda Keahey, led the Pacheco Falls hike that included 19 visitors and, for some, a dip at the falls.
- Eight visitors joined Rosemary Rideout's photography walk.
- Eight visitors participated in the Coe Ponds equestrian interpretive ride.
- The Saturday evening campfire program presented by Sheila Golden, accompanied by Greg Scott, was a huge success, very well attended, and included something for everyone—children and adults alike.

This was our safest backcountry event too, with no medical emergencies reported the entire weekend, although I'm sure a few of us came home with blisters, sunburns, ticks, lots of dust, AND BIG SMILES!!!

Many thanks to the public for participating in and enjoying the event to the full, and many thanks too to the many, many volunteers and park staff who staffed the event. It wouldn't happen without you.

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Late Spring 2011

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Backcountry weekend continued...



Burra Burra geology hike, photo by Cynthia Leeder



Collage of photos,
by Rosemary Rideout

A Tribute to Barbara Bessey and Kevin Gilmartin

By Winslow Briggs

One of the signs of the health of an organization such as the Pine Ridge Association is that there are members who are sufficiently interested in the organization and willing to serve on its board. By that criterion, the Pine Ridge Association is very healthy indeed—witness the new faces on the board over the past few years. Sadly, however, this turnover means losing extremely valuable members who have served for many years.

Barbara Bessey and Kevin Gilmartin rotated off the board at the last meeting in 2010. They joined the PRA in 1988 and since then have made important contributions to the Pine Ridge Association and to Coe Park in a whole series of different ways:

Editing *The Ponderosa*

Teaching volunteers, staff, and visitors about the birds in the park

Putting on evening programs at the visitor center

Participating in resource inventories

Serving the public in the visitor center

Struggling to get us an expanded visitor center

Updating the association bylaws

Serving on the PRA board of directors for many, many years

While serving on the PRA board, they willingly alternated as president when others of us were reluctant, something they both did very effectively with skill and diplomacy.

Between them, they have dedicated more than 10,000 uniformed volunteer hours to the park! It is my privilege to present them with a gift from the PRA in acknowledgement of their long and valuable service.

Editor's note: the gift was a beautiful watercolor painting of a male kestrel.



Photo by Barbara Bessey



News from Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs

By Laura Dominguez-Yon

Wow. The Third Annual Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs (GYHS) Walk Through History event was a big success.

Many thanks to the Pine Ridge Association volunteers who helped its success! And THANK YOU to the following people for their dedicated support and labor in protecting, preserving, and restoring GYHS:

- Joan Carpenter, Matt Bischoff, and Eddie Guaracha of the Department of Parks and Recreation. and their crews, for site improvements and maintenance.
- Tom Goold and Dean Yon for their labor on repairs and restoring functionality for Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs (FoGHS) events.
- Bill McDonald, Susan Lundblade, Joyce Amador, Henry Kato, Ron Erskine, and Blair Tellers for contributing to the news articles.
- Tim Lantz and Susan Farris Chamberlain for stepping forward to help FoGHS move ahead.

How things change while also staying the same. Yes, things change: trees grow, earth erodes, buildings age, earth abides. And things stay the same: the feel and sounds of being with nature calm the soul, refresh the spirit, clear the mind, renew our internal rhythms. Familiar paths and trees elicit a comforting smile.

Fallen or damaged trees remind us that things change with time. Just as spring turns into summer and fall turns into winter, seasons change while objects can stay the same.

I am often asked “Isn’t it hard for you to see the Hot Springs abandoned and neglected when you knew it before?” For my uncles and aunts who lived and worked here during the 1940s and 1950s, yes, they say it’s sad. Takeshi Aoki and his wife, Aiko, visited recently. Takeshi was among the 60 families who were fortunate to come to GYHS right after being released from the concentration camp that held the Japanese-Americans removed from communities along the West Coast. He was 8 years old. He was so excited to revisit the home he loved. Yes, he was disappointed to see the buildings that no longer stood: the hotel, the clubhouse, and especially Kansas—the cabin where he lived, next to the Lick House Hotel. But as he stood on the grounds, he smiled with the flow of memories of a very happy time, the joy of being a kid with full run of the outdoors, of the people who enjoyed renewed freedom and peace of mind, of the sense of adventure, of the smells and sounds found only in nature.

Things change, yet remain the same. For me, I was just a kid playing in the natural world, and that’s still here, very much alive. Sure, the limb of the tree where I loved to sit watching people at the swimming pool was recently cut off, and the beautiful manzanitas along the upper road were cut back. I’m glad I have photos of them as they were. And I acknowledge that overgrown trees are a fire hazard. So what’s more important—maintaining memories or preserving for the future? It’s more important to keep Henry Coe State Park open, and express gratitude for all who contribute to its safety and security. One tree is one tree. We have the opportunity and obligation to save a whole park full of trees.

Please join FoGHS! (Please fill out form on page 7)

Your paid membership helps protect, preserve, and restore this designated historic landmark! Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs is a nonprofit, cooperating organization working with the Pine Ridge Association of Henry W. Coe State Park.

Goals of FoGHS:

- Secure the property from further vandalism
- Preserve the remaining historic structures
- Restore the structures deemed important for the history of the site
- Protect and restore the grounds
- Reinstall utilities
- Reopen to the public
- Interpret the story of the Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs using signs, tours, and restored buildings

PRA Annual Meeting

By Barbara Bessey

The annual meeting of the Pine Ridge Association was held in Morgan Hill on February 5th, 2011.

Board of the Pine Ridge Association

PRA board president Paul Nam opened the meeting, introduced the members of the board of directors, and reported on the results of the election of officers. The officers of the board for 2011 are:

Paul Nam, president
 Ron Erskine, vice president
 Winslow Briggs, secretary
 Dan McCranie, treasurer
 Diana Maloney
 Ann Briggs
 Rob Glover
 Steve McHenry
 Bill Frazer and Linda Keahey (co-chair of the volunteer committee)

- Paul showed some slides that compared various aspects of Coe Park with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD). He noted that the state spends much less on Coe Park than the annual MROSD budget. While the MROSD has more volunteers and volunteer hours, Coe Park uniformed volunteers put in many more hours per volunteer (an average of 102 hours each from 128 volunteers) than the MROSD volunteers (an average of 30 hours each from the 500 volunteers). Paul emphasized the importance of the volunteers and staff at Coe Park and thanked them for all that they do to provide the programs and services needed to support the park and enrich visitors' experience.
- Ron announced that, after much discussion among board members and with staff of the Monterey District's Sector Office, the PRA will provide \$25,000 to pay for a park aid and 500 hours of State Park Interpreter Sheila Golden's time to continue to provide and coordinate interpretive programs at the park.
- Diana described efforts to set up social media forums, including a Facebook page and a special email group for uniformed volunteers and state staff, so they can quickly communicate about different topics, provide information, and answer questions.
- Dan provided an update on PRA finances (see article in the Early Spring edition of *The Ponderosa*).
- Rob, Manny Pitta, and Barbara Bessey provided an update on the new Pine Ridge Association website and showed some slides that illustrated the look and feel of the new site. The PRA has hired a web developer to migrate content from the existing site to the new site; the intent is to enable volunteers with no special web training to write new content and upload it to the website. The official rollout of the new website will be late 2011.
- Ann Briggs reported on the board's plans to honor John Wilkinson who died in August 2010. John was a nature lover, a staunch advocate of Coe Park and all State Parks, and a passionate supporter of wilderness and open spaces. John was a uniformed volunteer and was also a member of the PRA board of directors.
- Winslow paid tribute to Barbara Bessey and Kevin Gilmartin, who served on the PRA board for a combined total of 41 years. Barbara and Kevin have volunteered more than 10,000 hours since they became volunteers in 1989. Winslow presented a beautiful painting of a kestrel to Barbara and Kevin as a token of the board's appreciation for all their contributions (see separate article).

Volunteer Committee Meeting

The meeting of the PRA uniformed volunteers followed, co-chaired by Bill Frazer and Linda Keahey. They described the role of the volunteer committee, introduced the other members of the uniformed volunteer committee, and asked for more volunteers who might be willing to serve on the committee. Two new members of the committee are Liz Brinkman and Cynthia Leeder.

Continued on page 5....

PRA Annual Meeting Continued....

Barbara Bessey made a presentation about the recent recognition that Cynthia Leeder has received for her photography. Last year, one of her photos was used on the Coe Backcountry Weekend T-shirt and in December the California State Parks Foundation used one of her Coe Park photos in its annual calendar. Most recently, Cynthia was a winner of the month in a photo contest sponsored by myparkphotos.com.

Fourteen people who served 50 or more hours beyond the training program advanced to full volunteer status:

Jesse Benefiel	Paul Osborn
Liz Brinkman	Manny Pitta
Thomas Conrad	Keith Shiley
Patrick Goodrich	Lynne Starr
Cynthia Leeder	Dave Stoner
Paul Nam	John Thatcher
Dmitry Nechayev	James Wong

Seven 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 status:

Thomas Conrad	Dick Rawson
Patrick Goodrich	Dave Stoner
Sue Harwager	Jim Swartz
Cynthia Leeder	

Thirty-five volunteers received the 2010 visitor service award, a sling pack embossed with the PRA logo. These volunteers spent 48 or more hours working in the visitor center or on other visitor-related activities during the past year, for example, presenting programs to visitors or leading hikes and participating in interpretive events:

Einar Anderson	Lucy Henderson	Pat Scharfe
Chere Bargar	Linda Keahey	Rosemary Schmidt
Barbara Bessey	Gary Keller	Dave Stoner
Jim Brady	Rick Leonard	Carolyn Straub
Ann Briggs	Margaret Mary McBride	Kitty Swindle
Winslow Briggs	Steve McHenry	John Thatcher
Thomas Conrad	Lois Phillips	Nancy Thomas
Bill Frazer	Manny Pitta	Gerge Van Gorden
Kevin Gilmartin	John Prior	Bev VanderWeide
Patrick Goodrich	Dick Rawson	Libby Vincent
Teddy Goodrich	Don Savant	Bill Workman
Sue Harwager	Diane Scariot	

Nine volunteers received special recognition for all the hours they have spent on Coe Park volunteer activities over the years. Between them, they have donated 45,591.5 hours to the park! Carolyn Straub volunteered at least 1,000 hours of service. Gary Keller, Dan McCranie, and Mike Meyer each volunteered at least 3,000 hours of service. Stew Eastman volunteered more than 4,000 hours of service. Teddy Goodrich volunteered more than 5,000 hours of service. Ann and Winslow Briggs each donated more than 8,000 hours of service. And Ruby Domino donated more than 10,000 hours of service!

A special silver pin with the association's logo was presented to ten people who have participated in the uniformed volunteer program for ten or more years: Heather Ambler, Einar Anderson, Pat Dallam, Holly Harper, Mike Harper, Pete Henshaw, Dan McCranie, Greg Scott, Nancy Thomas, and Paul Yellowhorse.

A special gold pin with the PRA logo was presented to four people who have participated in the uniformed volunteer program for twenty or more years: Ron Erskine, David Perrin, Carolyn Tucker, and Sandy Voechting.

Continued on Page 10....

Henry Coe State Park Visitor Center is Getting a Facelift

By Ranger Jen Naber

As some of you may know, there have been some major changes at Henry Coe Park's visitor center, changes I like to call a "facelift." In short, displays have been moved, redesigned, or removed completely. The Pine Ridge Association office has been reduced to just over half the size it used to be. I'm sure many of you are scratching your heads and thinking "what in the world is going on?" To help answer that question, and hopefully alleviate some fears, I wanted to let you know what exactly is happening at the visitor center.

As many of you long-time volunteers know, the visitor center looks much the same today as it did back when it was designed over thirty years ago. And while the visitor center has stayed the same our park visitors haven't. With the development of new technologies and improvements in interpretation, many of the old displays are simply outdated.

It all started one day when I was looking at the interpretive panels that hang on the wall in the center room. While the contexts of the panels are still relevant, the designs of the panels themselves are dated and don't draw the attention they deserve. For example, it's quite difficult to educate people on how beautiful a manzanita or madrone is using black and white photos. With help from our Sector Interpreter Nikki Combs, I have created three new panels that have actual photos from Coe Park's past. One focuses on recreation in Coe Park, one on the daily life on a ranch, and the third on manzanitas and madrones. In the interests of full disclosure, these panels never would have come to fruition if it weren't for the help of wonderful volunteers like Dick Rawson and Teddy Goodrich who provided all the photos and Winslow Briggs for his knowledge of plants.

Another exciting new addition is all thanks to volunteer Tom Conrad. Back in October I handed Tom a childlike drawing of a new temporary exhibit I've seen at other visitor centers. Tom has taken that drawing (scribble really) and created a beautiful and fun exhibit where kids of all ages get to stick their hands into five separate covered boxes and guess what the item inside is. I'd like to personally thank Tom and his wife, Phyllis, who have not only donated time but also all the supplies to build this new exhibit.

For those wondering about the other exhibits like the Coe family dining furniture, you need not worry. As of now, there will be no more major display changes. Furthermore, these changes are only temporary, designed to give the visitor center a "facelift" while the park's interpretive prospectus is being created.

If anyone has any additional questions or ideas, I would love to hear them. And if I haven't told you in a while, thank you for your dedication to and love for this amazing park.



Manzanita



MANZANITA
("Little Apple" in Spanish)

Manzanitas are characterized by their smooth, chocolate-brown bark and their small white blossoms in the winter. Big Berry Manzanitas are common in Henry W. Coe State Park. These shrubs can reach heights of 25 feet or more and might be mistaken for trees. Their leaves have a dull surface and are about 1 1/2 inches long. The Manzanita's smooth bark peels in the spring.



MADRONE

Madrone trees are characterized by their smooth orange-yellow bark and their cool-feeling trunk. In the spring, small white blossoms, similar to the Manzanita, bloom high overhead. Madrone trees are fairly common in the eastern woodlands of Henry W. Coe State Park. Their leaves are shiny and about five inches long. The Madrone's smooth bark peels in the spring.



Madrone

The PRA Calendar

Mark your calendars—important dates and other announcements

Grass Classes, Saturday May 21 and Sunday May 22

Two classes are being offered by Dick Rawson, both are open to Coe Park volunteers and PRA members:

- Day 1, Grasses at Coe Park, Getting Started, Saturday May 21, 9:00am to 4:00pm, interpretive room, Dunne Avenue visitor center.
- Day 2, Grasses at Coe Park, Laboratory/Workshop, Sunday May 22, 9:00am to 3:00pm, interpretive room, Dunne Avenue visitor center.

For more information, call Dick Rawson 408-265-1276, email dick.rawson@coepark.org, or check <http://www.coepark.org/wildflowers/Grass-class-2011-05-promo-C.pdf>

Saturday June 11, *Hunting Hollow 5K/10K walk and fun run*. You can register for this fun event at www.coepark.org and download an entry form.

Early Days at San Juan Bautista State Historic Park, June 25–26, 2011

Have you ever wondered what life was like for a stage coach driver in the mid 1800s? Or a mountain man panning for gold? Have you ever wanted to eat bread baked in a traditional Mexican oven or drink a soda in a bar that hasn't changed in over a hundred years? Then come one, come all to San Juan Bautista State Historic Park's Early Days 2011.

The event this year will be held on Saturday June 25th and Sunday June 26th from 10:00am until 4:00pm. Set back in time from the mid 1800s through early 1900s, there will be craft and cooking demonstrations and rides in a horse-drawn wagon. Meet the people of early California from the mountain men to the cattle rustlers, and more. The cost is only \$3 for any one 17 years and older. Please note that wagon rides and sodas are not included in the admission price. For additional information, please call 831-623-4881.

Want to volunteer or know someone who might? We are always looking for additional help from baking bread to working in our blacksmith shop. If you'd like to help out, please contact Ranger Jen Naber at 408-842-9257 or at jnaber@parks.ca.gov.

We can't wait to see you there!

Ranger Jen Naber

Help Heal Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible check made out to Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs in the amount of:

\$35.00 member _____

\$50.00 family _____

\$15.00 senior, 62+ _____

\$100.00 donor _____

\$500.00 supporter _____

\$1,000.00+ benefactor _____

Please mail your check to:

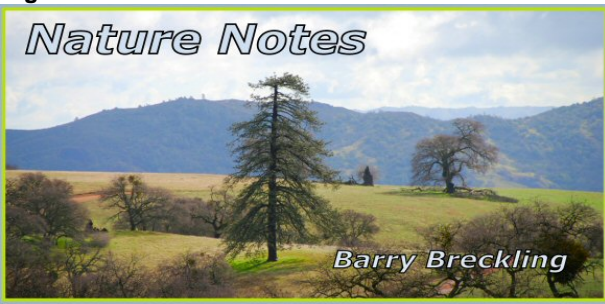
Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs

P.O. Box 1745

Gilroy, CA 95021-1745

We appreciate your support.

Nature Notes



Lizards

Warming spring days awaken the coldblooded reptiles. Soon lizards will be sunning their scaly bodies on rocks and logs. Six different species of lizards have been found in Coe Park. Probably the most common and the best know is the Blue-belly Lizard, or more properly the Western Fence Lizard. The males attract females by doing pushups, which reveals their brilliant-blue chin and belly patches. In a subtle chameleon-manner, fence lizards are able to change their color to match their background.

Western Fence Lizard



© 2005 Tom Greer tbphotos@comcast.net

Western Alligator Lizards can look quite ferocious, especially when they open their mouths in defense. Although they are quite terrestrial, they don't hesitate to swim. I came upon a very large alligator lizard laying motionless at the edge of Madrone Soda Spring Creek. I decided to measure it—15 ½ inches! Finally it decided I was too close and it dove into the creek and swam to the bottom.

Western Alligator Lizard



© Barry Breckling

Coast Horned Lizards, often called Horney Toads, are common in the dryer eastern areas of the park, but they are occasionally seen as far west as Manzanita Point. They are easily overlooked. Most lizards run off when disturbed. Horned lizards stay motionless using their camouflage to become almost invisible.

Coast Horned Lizard



© Barry Breckling

If they feel very threatened, they can squirt blood from their eyes. Their spiny bodies give them the appearance of miniature dinosaurs. The spines do provide some protection, but if you pick one up, the spines won't hurt you. An interesting thing happens if you turn any kind of lizard on its back. They enter a catatonic state. You don't even need to rub their belly as some people say. Lizards have difficulty breathing when on their backs, and to conserve oxygen, they go into the trance-like state.

If you see a flash of fluorescent blue disappear into the leaf litter, it's probably the tail of the Western Skink. You seldom get a look at the whole animal. Skinks, like most lizards, can shed their tail if they think a predator is going to grab them. The predator is left with only a bright blue wiggling tail while the skink escapes. Within a few months they will grow a new tail.

Western Skink



© 2008 William Fixington

Less shy are the Western Whiptails who will often allow you to watch them hunting for insects on the ground. It is likely less wary because of its speed. It can outrun most animals that would want to eat it.

W e s t e r n W h i p t a i l



© Barry Breckling

The rarest lizard in the park, the California Legless Lizard, looks more like a snake than a lizard. They burrow into leaf litter, sand, and soft soils. I've only seen one and it was in a sandy area near the Orestimba Corrals. They are not considered rare or endangered but are a species of special concern. What makes them a lizard and not a snake? Legless lizards have lizard characteristics: eyelids, legs (vestigial), internal hip joints, small scales on their bellies, and a tail that they can break off; snakes have none of these characteristics.

California Legless Lizard



© 2008 William Fixington

The Sagebrush Lizard and the Side-blotched Lizard, could be in the park but have not been reported as yet.

News from the Board of the Pine Ridge Association

By Paul Nam

A special meeting of the board of directors of the Pine Ridge Association (PRA) was held on March 22nd, 2011 to address the potential closure of Henry W. Coe State Park because of anticipated budget cuts by the State government. The board has received information that Coe Park will be included in the list of State Parks to be closed, although this list has not yet been published.

The meeting focused on two topics:

1. Review and clarification of the purpose and means of the newly formed Coe Park Preservation Fund and its relationship to the PRA.
2. The development of an action plan in case Coe Park is on the list of parks to be closed.

The Coe Park Preservation Fund is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation with the mission of raising funds to support the park in the event that it is closed. The PRA board has agreed to serve as a fiduciary for the fund, and to hold funds until the Coe Park Preservation Fund is incorporated. The PRA's mission, organization, and relationship with the Department of Parks and Recreation do not accommodate the mission of the fund.

In the event that Henry W. Coe State Park is on the list of parks to close, the board has composed a letter addressed to the members of the PRA with details about closure and the fund. This letter will be distributed when the list of parks to close is released, assuming Coe Park is on that list.

In the meantime, the PRA works on two levels—one as if operations are normal, and the other anticipating the worst-case closure scenario.

I support the Coe Park Preservation Fund because closure of the park would be disastrous. We need only look at the example of Gilroy Hot Springs to see what happens to a closed State Park property. In 2003-2004, the Department of Parks and Recreation closed Gilroy Hot Springs to public access; this has kept out the positive influence of volunteers and has inadvertently given vandals, treasure hunters, graffiti artists, and drunken revelers practically unrestricted access to the area. Unfortunately, many of the historic structures have been damaged, and have become dilapidated, derelict, and even been destroyed in recent years.

If the expanse of Coe Park is abandoned by visitors and volunteers, we can expect similar inappropriate use and access. A park closure is a gross mismanagement of the resources—natural, cultural, and recreational—of a park. It must be avoided.

Coe Park and the surrounding open space and conservation easement lands are a natural resource of biodiversity, a life raft for the bio-region. Recreational access to Henry W. Coe State Park is critical because this is how people enjoy, interpret, appreciate, and develop a respect for the natural world as well California history. A park closure, even if only temporary, means that everyone will be denied direct experience of the park.

Our objective is to keep the park open. How can the people of California continue to learn to value and protect their natural and cultural resources if they are denied access to them?

PRA Annual Meeting Continued....

A pin was specially made this past year to honor the two people—Teddy Goodrich and Gary Keller—from the original class of volunteers for their thirty years of service as volunteers.

Ranger John Verhoeven presented annual passes to California State Parks to 30 volunteers 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:

Chere Bargar	Teddy Goodrich	Bob Patrie
Barbara Bessey	Don Holmes	Dick Rawson
Jim Brady	Ken Howell	Martie Sinclair
Ann Briggs	Jodie Keahey	Rob Sinclair
Winslow Briggs	Linda Keahey	Dave Stoner
Thomas Conrad	Cynthia Leeder	Carolyn Straub
Ruby Domino	Diana Maloney	Kitty Swindle
Bill Frazer	Steve McHenry	Libby Vincent
Kevin Gilmartin	Paul Nam	Bill Workman
Rob Glover	Sam Parker	
Patrick Goodrich		

Ranger John Verhoeven presented free annual passes to State Parks within the Monterey District to 46 volunteers (uniformed and nonuniformed) who had donated at least 72 hours but fewer than 200 hours (and to families whose combined number of hours totaled between 72 and 200 hours):

Everett Allen	Greg Lee	Greg Scott
Heather Ambler	Rick Leonard	Sharon Slattery
Dan Benefiel	Daniel Lewis	Lynne Starr
Jesse Benefiel	Margaret Mary McBride	Susan Stillman
Liz Brinkman	Mike Meyer	Dan Straus
Darryl Dubois	Dmitry Nechayev	Bonnie Stromberg
Ron Fischler	Gary Newsome	Jim Swartz
Debbie Frederick	Matt Pauly	John Thatcher
Sue Harwager	Lois Phillips	Nancy Thomas
Ken Hulick	Manny Pitta	Sigal Tzoore
Jan Jeffers	John Prior	George Van Gorden
Ralph Johnson	Don Savant	Bev VanderWeide
Gary Keller	Diane Scariot	Sandy Voechting
Irwin Koff	Pat Scharfe	Paul Yellowhorse
Janet Koff	Rosemary Schmidt	Gena Zolotar
		Jeff Zolotar

Golden Bear Award

The uniformed volunteer committee's Golden Bear Award for exceptional service was given to Jim Brady. Jim became a volunteer in 2005. He has spent many hours working on the volunteer committee and coordinating volunteer events, such as the annual training sessions. He has volunteered more than 1,600 hours to the park, of which 1,000 hours were spent in the visitor center.

Volunteer of the Year

The PRA volunteer-of-the-year award is given to people who have 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, Rob Glover, and Martie Sinclair, went to two individuals—Ranger Cameron Bowers and Gary Keller. Many people may be surprised to know that Cameron served as a park aid at Coe Park many years ago. He currently serves as Coe Park's Backcountry Ranger. Over the years, he has gone out of his way

Continued on page 11....

PRA Annual Meeting Continued....

to support the association in many ways. Despite his shyness, he conducted many of the Backcountry Weekend campfire programs and excels at getting children's attention and admiration. More than one person commented on his willingness to change his schedule to accommodate volunteers who wanted to get out into the backcountry; he has also carried out many late-night rescues of lost or distressed hikers and mountain bikers. Former Ranger Barry Breckling described him as the "quintessential ranger."

Gary has been a volunteer since 1980, the first class of volunteers. At the end of 2010, he had volunteered more than 3,000 hours; 1,000 of them staffing the visitor center. Many people who have worked with Gary over the years have expressed the feeling that he was there to do whatever it took to support the park and the association. He has served for many, many years as the PRA computer "guru," working with, fixing, and upgrading the PRA computer and printers. He has also worked at the annual Tarantulafest and taught volunteer training classes. He also was awarded the volunteer committee's Golden Bear award in the mid-1980s.

This year's speaker was John Karachewski, a hydrogeologist who also specializes in geologic and natural history landscape photography of the western United States. John gave an excellent presentation on the geology of Coe Park and other areas in the western U.S.

A delicious lunch was provided at the end of the meeting. Many thanks to the volunteers who worked hard in the kitchen preparing all the food.

Congratulations to everyone!

New Members

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

Martin Asplund, Morgan Hill
Nina Cooke, San Jose
Diana Fuzere & Doug Thompson, Campbell
Parks Photography, Morgan Hill
Herveline Santori, Mountain View
Travis Taylor, Morgan Hill
Rolf Wertenaer, Half Moon Bay
Scott Williams, Martinez

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 question regarding your membership or to let us know of any change of address, please contact us:

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

Ranch Day

By Chere Bargar

The day dawned gray and cool. Volunteers arrived early at Hunting Hollow to set up booths, displays, and tables. By 10:00am everything was ready. We waited. A few visitors came, but where were the rest? This was the rain date—did people not notice this date on the flyer? Was all the preparation and work for naught?

Then the sun came out and the parking lot began to fill. Soon a steady stream of children and their parents, over 200 of them, were enjoying the day.

Look at all the animals to pet and cuddle! What to do first—brush the miniature horses, pet the big horse or the little donkeys with their long ears, feel the sheep's woolly back, or hold a rabbit or chicken? Did you know that eggs come from chickens and that they are different colors?

Steve, the turkey, let me pet him and feel his snood.

Horses don't go to Walmart to buy shoes—their shoes are nailed on their feet and it doesn't even hurt!

In the old days, people had to do so many things just to have clothes. The sheep or alpaca had to be sheared, wool had to be carded and cleaned—all that work before it could be spun into thread. It's fun to make the spinning wheel go round and round for a while, but I might get tired before I had enough thread to make something.

Linen is made from a plant. I never would have guessed that the long blonde ponytail hanging up was flax.



Petting a tortoise. Photo by Sue Dekalb

Look at all the stuffed animals and pelts. The grizzly cub is as tall as me. A picture of a grizzly is on our state flag, but they don't live in California anymore.

The Ohlone used so many things from the natural world. They had to get all their food and make their houses from what they gathered and found. It sure was much harder than going to the store.

The ranchers and farmers made tools, planted gardens for food, and didn't have cars.

Cattle roamed over many acres eating grass. There were no corrals, so cowboys had to rope any cow that was sick or hurt so they could doctor it. The cowboy makes it look easy to rope the steer head—I think I'll give it a try. Oops, it's not as easy as it looks. I think it might be more fun to rope my little sister.

I'm getting hungry—do I want a hot dog or a peanut butter and jelly sandwich?

All those kids at the craft table look like they're having fun, and they're making things they get to take home. I better get over there.

Now off to the creek. The ranger has nets we can use to catch critters that live in the water. I didn't know so many things lived in there. Enough of that. Now it's time to GET WET!

The kids had fun. The parents had fun. The volunteers had fun watching everyone have fun. All in all, a very fun day. A big thank you to all the volunteers who helped make it happen.



Steve, the turkey. Photo by Colleen Combes

New Role for the Uniformed Volunteer Committee

By Bill Frazer

Significant changes have taken place in the responsibility that the uniformed volunteer committee has in dealing with the activities of the uniformed volunteers at Henry W. Coe State Park. In the past, the committee has pretty much managed the uniformed volunteers, leaving the park staff free to pursue their other duties. A particularly contentious responsibility for the committee was the tracking of the hours requirements of the uniformed volunteers and the often unpleasant task of dealing with those volunteers who did not meet the requirements. Park staff have now taken over that responsibility.

At our March meeting the committee, along with park staffers Ranger John Verhoeven and Ranger Stuart Organo, took some time to discuss and redefine just what the functions of the committee should be. The results of that discussion can be summarized in this one statement: **The goal of the volunteer committee is to provide the staff of Henry Coe State Park with assistance and advice in managing, supporting, and coordinating the activities of the uniformed volunteers.** Note that the committee is no longer directly responsible for managing the uniformed volunteers.

So, what is the uniformed volunteer committee actually supposed to do? Below is a summary of the duties we agreed upon:

1. Establish, in cooperation with the volunteer coordinator, an annual calendar of training, work days, programs, volunteer events, and public events.
2. Assist with the training of new volunteers and providing continuing training for all volunteers.
3. Assist the board of the Pine Ridge Association in finding coordinators and staff for special public events (for example, the Coe Backcountry Weekend, Mother's Day Breakfast, and Tarantulafest).
4. Keep an accounting of the hours worked by the uniformed volunteers, report earned hours to the volunteer coordinator, and advance the status of volunteers when appropriate (for example from regular to senior volunteer).
5. Provide incentives to encourage volunteers to remain active as volunteers and to increase their hours spent volunteering (for example, the Visitor Service award, thousand-hour pins, the Golden Bear award, and special volunteer activities).
6. Reach out to the community to recruit new volunteers for the uniformed volunteer program.
7. Meet on a bimonthly basis.
8. Report on the activities of the uniformed volunteers to the board of the Pine Ridge Association.
9. Contribute information and articles to *The Ponderosa*.
10. Host an annual meeting to which all volunteers, PRA members, and public supporters are invited to attend.
11. Assist park staff with obtaining volunteer assistance for special needs or events.
12. Serve as a resource for review of and advice for those volunteers who propose interpretive projects and activities in the park and seek PRA funding.

By the way, the full committee consists of five uniformed volunteers:

Bill Frazer, co-chair
Linda Keahey, co-chair
Liz Brinkman
Cynthia Leeder
Jim Wright

We currently need to fill one vacancy. If you would like to help your park staff by becoming a member of the committee, please contact Linda Keahey or Bill Frazer. We would welcome your help.



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Linda Keahey, Chair
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Liz Brinkman
Cynthia Leeder
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, jodiellindak@sbcglobal.net

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

Deadline for the next issue: July 31, 2011

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