

The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park



Summer 2016



Unnamed pond.
Photo by Ron Erskine.

Coe Outings Backpack

By Ron Erskine

Our love and support of Coe Park rest on an odd and ambiguous foundation. As volunteers or Pine Ridge Association members, we hope to widen peoples' awareness of the park and attract new visitors. Yet much of what we like about Coe is the solitude we find there. I saw a Memorial Day post on Facebook from Barry Breckling who was resident ranger at the park for many years until he retired. He estimated that the line behind the Yosemite entry gate on Highway 120 was four miles. Clearly, too many visitors can turn the healing we find in natural places into a toxin.

The solitude we enjoy at Coe will never be lost as it has been in more popular parks like Yosemite. The good news and the bad news is that the three visitor entrances barely pierce the park boundary, leaving people many miles from places like Mustang Flat, Robison Creek, or the San Antonio Valley; miles that can only be crossed on foot, bike, or horse. It is a pity that more people don't see these areas, but how do we get them there without destroying it?

That's a big question, too big for me to answer. But perhaps a piece of the answer is the PRA's Coe Outings backpack trips. Two of the last three years, I have guided small groups of backpackers, who for a fee (\$50 per person, \$40 for PRA members, all proceeds going to the PRA), shoulder their backpacks at the Orestimba Corral, a starting point that puts remote portions of the park within reach. People love these outings and our trip this past spring was no exception.

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Coe Outings Backpack, continued....

The original date in early March had been rained out, but all fourteen people who signed up were able to come on a weekend in mid-April. We left most vehicles at the Dowdy Ranch and carpoled to the Orestimba Corral. In March, it had been a disappointment to postpone the trip, but it turned out to be a blessing. We hoisted our packs on a crystalline morning and we enjoyed perfect weather all weekend.

Barely underway—a couple hundred yards down the Orestimba Creek Trail—we stopped at a favorite spot of mine. I think it was Larry Haimowitz who once told me, “If you see a large creekside rock outcrop that looks like a pleasant place to linger, stop and take a closer look. It likely had the same appeal to the original residents hundreds of years ago.” This spot by a just-born Orestimba Creek looks like that. Sure enough, there are a number of acorn grinding holes confirming the wisdom of Larry’s advice.

Any time of year, the blue oak savannah along the Orestimba Creek Trail is beautiful, but in spring after a wet winter, it was gaudy with delphiniums, onions, Chinese houses, Ithuriel’s spear, purple owl’s clover, and on and on.

After two miles on the Orestimba Creek Trail then two more on Orestimba Creek Road, we set up camp on a bench above the creek and below an unnamed pond. After lunch, with a lighter day pack load, we continued down the creek to one of the park’s prettiest spots: the broad opening beneath the Rooster Comb. If you have only seen the rugged and corrugated Coe Park near the Dunne Avenue visitor center, this sight is a revelation. Some turned back toward camp, while others climbed up to the “two second mine shaft” at the foot of the rim of rock that is the Rooster Comb. (If you drop a stone into the shaft it’s two seconds until you hear it hit bottom.)

Each of the Coe Outings backpack trips I have led really seem to hit the sweet spot in the balance between opening the park’s remote backcountry to visitors without tarnishing its silence, solitude, and beauty. I have tried to offer a trip that is short on pain and long on pleasure. But it’s Coe Park that delivers the goods. Smiles always prevail, and why not? At day’s end, we were a tired but happy group watching the evening’s soft light warm a soft landscape that seemed to embrace us rather than resist us.



Walking in.
Photo by Ron Erskine.



Enjoying an evening meal.



Hike after lunch, beneath the Rooster Comb.

Photos by Ron Erskine.

Fire Roads

By Teddy Goodrich

In the visitor center, people often ask “Do I have to walk on the fire road?” Dear visitor, you are not walking on a fire road; you are walking on a piece of history.

Almost all park roads began as horse trails and wagon roads. Before bulldozers came into common use there was no easy way to contour a trail or road into a hillside, so all the old routes went by the shortest way possible to their destination, which was often straight up and straight down.

The Government Trail was probably not an official name but it was a name of use given to what now appears on the Coe Park map as “Hobbs Road.” It was a horse, mule, and wagon trail that gave homesteaders access to government land in the interior of the range. An implement modeled after a travois, locally called a “lizard,” was used to move heavy items such as lumber and construction materials into the backcountry.

When Pine Ridge Ranch was owned by Henry Coe, there were only horse and wagon trails that followed the original uphill, downhill pattern. The switchbacks and the Jeep road were created by O.S. Beach during his ownership sometime in the 1940s, although some of the original trail remains. Anyone who has hiked to Mt. Sizer is well aware of one of the more challenging stretches, up to Blue Ridge on the “short cut.”

The Government Trail was well used, allowing homesteaders Harriet Hunt, the Widow Hobbs, Lars Marken, and Henry Boden access to their land. When you walk that way and pass the fence line marking the boundary between the park and the neighboring ranch, pause for a moment and remember the Widow Hobbs in her cabin at Deer Horn Spring. I’ve been told by a reliable source that the cowboys on the neighboring ranch beat quite a path to her door because she always had cold beer for the men.

Horace Willson is credited with the creation of the Old Wagon Road in the mid 1800s. Originally the road led from Hunting Hollow to his large cattle ranch, but in the 1890s Frederick Hyde extended it all the way to the Orestimba Ranch. Hyde also installed a phone line from his ranch headquarters on Canada Road all the way to the Orestimba.

County Line Road was constructed during World War II to allow access in case of downed aircraft in the interior of the Diablo Range. At the same time, a lookout tower for observing approaching enemy aircraft was built on Bear Mountain. Murry Hopkins, CDF heavy equipment operator, drove the dozer that created County Line Road. George Britton, then chief ranger for CDF in Morgan Hill, drove out every few weeks to check on the road’s progress. If he could drive his car in second gear on the new portion of the road, he gave it his approval. As for the lookout tower, it was never used because of the introduction of radar shortly after its construction.

Murry Hopkins, no longer employed by CDF, would go on to build many roads, among them Spike Jones and Wasno Road, for Frank Coit and his guests.



A “lizard” hauling heavy items.



The Widow Hobbs.

Photos from the Coe Park archives.

California Red-legged Frog

Every year on the third weekend in May, Calaveras County holds its annual fair in conjunction with an event for which it has become widely acclaimed: the Jumping Frog Jubilee, a frog jumping contest inspired by Mark Twain's story *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*. Before rising to literary prominence, Twain lived for a time near Angel's Camp and wrote the story based on one told to him by a local bartender. It became his first published work and featured the California Red-legged Frog (*Rana draytonii*) as its centerpiece, securing for the frog a place in California's cultural, as well as its natural, heritage.

The California Red-legged Frog is the largest frog native to the West, growing up to five and a half inches long and coming in a variety of colors: brown, gray, olive, orange, and maroon. It was formerly considered one of two subspecies of Red-legged Frog, the other being the Northern Red-legged Frog (*Rana aurora*), which is found from Northern California to British Columbia. However, DNA analysis and behavioral differences have led each to be classified as separate species, and where the two meet they don't interbreed.

California Red-legged Frogs were once found from Mendocino County and the Sacramento Valley south to Baja, and east to the mid-elevation Sierra Nevada. Today they have disappeared from much of that range. They were last seen in the Central Valley in 1960, are very rare in southern California and Baja, and known from only a handful of locations in the Sierra, though they persist in higher numbers along the coast. In 1996 they became the first frog species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Amphibian declines have become one of the most pressing biodiversity issues of the past twenty years. Many once-common species have experienced massive die-offs, some going extinct. The downfall of the California Red-legged Frog, however, began in the 19th century when it was basically eaten to scarcity. Between 1888 and 1895, nearly half a million were harvested, a take from which the California Red-legged Frog has never recovered.



Adult California Red-legged Frog.
Photo by Joseph Belli.



There were other factors in the frog's decline. Habitat loss and alteration played a huge role, and pesticides have likely been a detriment. The widespread introduction of non-native fish and bullfrogs have hit them hard as well. Fish are particularly devastating, feeding on egg masses, tadpoles, and juvenile frogs. Bullfrogs prey on tadpoles and juvenile frogs, compete with adults for food and space, and have the potential to spread diseases. Bullfrogs were brought to California in the 1890s from the Midwest to keep up with the demand for frog legs as Red-legged Frogs became depleted. They were released at numerous locations throughout the state and today are widespread and common at all but the highest elevations. They've succeeded by being generalists, able to thrive in altered habitats such as canals, reservoirs, and irrigation ditches that are hostile toward most native amphibians. Though tied to watery habitats, they are fully capable of moving over land for several miles, allowing them to

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California Red-legged Frog, continued....

spread and colonize new areas. Their tadpoles are apparently unpalatable to the non-native fish that devastate Red-legged Frogs; that ability to coexist with fish is another reason why Bullfrogs have prospered in California. They're also highly prolific, able to occur in greater densities than Red-legged Frogs. When and how they arrived in Coe Park remains a mystery. A baseline ecological study conducted in 1972 by San Jose State students made no mention of them, but the Coe Park of 44 years ago was one seventh the size of the current park and had only five ponds. (There are over one hundreds ponds in Coe today.) Most of what is now Coe was private ranchland then. Perhaps landowners stocked ponds with both fish and Bullfrogs; more likely, Bullfrogs colonized the park by spreading from the valley floor. Today they're found throughout the park and unfortunately they're here to stay. Even if they could be eliminated from within the park boundary, many surrounding properties provide habitat for them and those frogs would be constantly dispersing to recolonize the park.



Tadpole in a net.
Photo by Joseph Belli.

If all this sounds bleak for Red-legged Frogs in Coe there is good news because Red-legged Frogs seem to be holding their own. They're present to at least some degree in all the park's watersheds, and are known to breed in over three dozen of the park's ponds. They even have an advantage over Bullfrogs: Red-legged Frog tadpoles hatch in late winter/early spring and take three to five months to transform. Bullfrog tadpoles hatch in summer and usually require a full year. Red-legged frogs are thus able to use ponds that dry in late summer/fall, while Bullfrogs cannot; they need ponds with year-round water. Fortunately, Coe has a number of ponds that dry regularly and are used by Red-legged Frogs but not Bullfrogs.

Fish represent less of a threat in Coe than Bullfrogs, even though their presence in a pond all but ensures that Red-legged Frogs can't breed there. They may be disastrous, but unlike Bullfrogs, fish can't move from pond to pond. That only happens if people get involved. Fortunately, most of Coe's ponds are situated in the backcountry, often at considerable distances from each other, making it very difficult for hikers or backpackers to move fish around. Doing that basically requires a vehicle. Transplanting fish is a serious matter and against park rules; anyone permitted to drive through the park should know better. But it has happened. Hurricane Pond did not have fish when it became part of Coe in 1993; they were later documented there. Yet ponds can also lose fish: Hoover Lake dried in the 1990s, and shortly thereafter, Red-legged Frogs returned. Like Bullfrogs, they're able to move considerable distances through rough terrain to get from pond to pond and that ability has served them well in Coe.

So you've heard about Red-legged Frogs, you know they're in the park, but you've never seen one and would like to. But you don't know where to go, or for that matter how to tell them apart from Bullfrogs. Your best bet to see one is in the ponds near Hunting Hollow. Steer Ridge and the Vasquez Peak area are hotspots, as are the following: Rodeo Pond, Purple Pond, Yellowjacket Pond, Wood Duck Pond, and Turkey Pond. Getting a good look at one can be challenging, for they are cryptic and well camouflaged, jumping into the water and diving to the bottom as you approach. If you're patient, they'll usually return to shore in a matter of minutes. If you do see a frog, note the color. Bullfrogs always have some green on their face, but Red-legged Frogs do not, and any frog that is reddish or rust-colored will be a Red-leg. Bullfrogs are also vocal—when they jump, they usually squawk loudly. Red-legged frogs, in contrast, are silent.

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California Red-legged Frog, continued....

One of the most valuable attributes of Coe Park is that it provides a window into what the area looked like centuries ago. Yet the landscape has seen change and ponds are an example. Ranchers added them, mostly within the past 100 years. In most cases, alterations to natural landscapes have hurt Red-legged Frogs, but not in this instance. The Coe countryside of 1850 had few if any ponds. It had no introduced fish, no Bullfrogs, and almost certainly far fewer Red-legged Frogs. While they may have been present in some streams, they don't seem to breed much there. For breeding they rely heavily on ponds, so much so that the frog's future in the park may hinge on the fate of its ponds. We tend to think of physical features on the land as permanent, but ponds, especially man-made ones, are decidedly finite. Their basins fill with silt and their earthen dams leak and blow out in wet winters. The larger ones—Mississippi Lake, Coit Lake, and Kelly lake—should be around for centuries. The smaller ones, who knows? The lifespan of a pond is hard to gauge and varies with each situation, but maintenance can extend the life of a pond. It's hard to say what the future holds but for now things are looking pretty good. I guess that's about all you can ask for, whether you're a Red-legged Frog or just a person who's glad they're still out there.



Juvenile California Red-legged Frog.



Egg mass.

Photos by Joseph Belli.

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 U.S. mail.

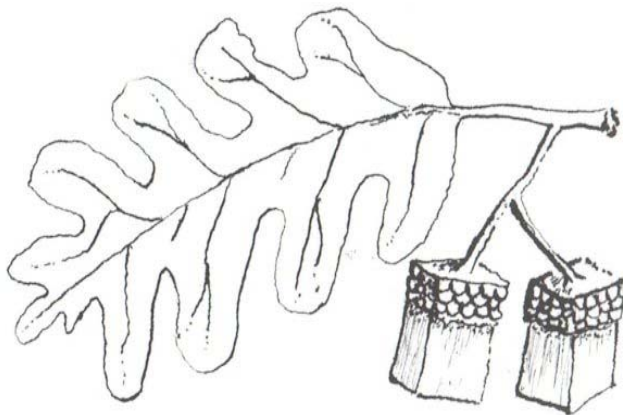
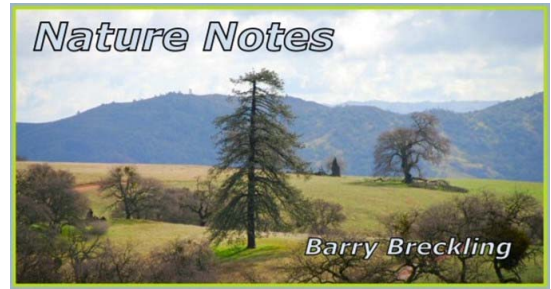
Priska Bitterli, San Jose CA
 Steve Sergeant, San Jose CA
 Sandra Stanley, Morgan Hill CA

Email: membership@coepark.net
 U.S. mail: 9100 East Dunne Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA 95037
<http://coepark.net/pineridgeassociation/join>

The Legend of the Oak

This is a story that I built in my mind more than 40 years ago and finally wrote it down for an article in *The Ponderosa* back in 1980. Eventually a longer version ended up in my book, *From Under My Brim*.

As summer fades into fall, male tarantulas will leave their dens in search of mates. Poison oak, black oaks, and big-leaf maples will brighten the landscape with reds and yellows, and acorns will begin to fall from the eight species of oaks found in the park. How did Coe end up with so many species of oaks?



Square acorns.

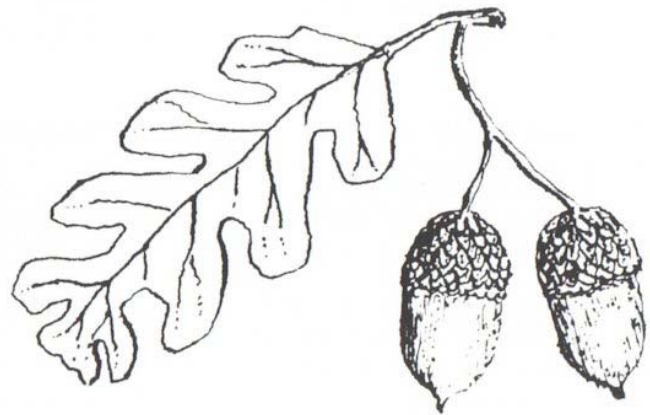
Drawing by Barry Breckling.

Some of the round acorns were picked up by a fluffy-tailed gray squirrel who scurried off to bury them down the hillside. Unlike the square acorns, these round acorns fitted comfortably in her mouth and she knew that she could come back in the winter and dig up the acorns, but that winter she forgot some of the places she'd buried them.

Once again the other trees laughed. A scruffy looking scrub jay saw the squirrel burying the acorns and decided it was a good idea and flew off to a higher hill and buried his acorns there. More laughter echoed across the hillsides. Several years passed and most of the young oaks producing their first acorns had round ones. These were the trees that had grown from the buried acorns and those that had rolled down the hillside and found a favorable place to sprout. Down in the valley below and off on neighboring ridges could be seen other young oak trees with round acorns. Soon trees were found throughout the land, and the oak trees with the square acorns no longer laughed.

Some bright fall day, if you're exploring deep in the mountains, you may come across a high, rounded hill, and if you look very carefully you might discover a few lonely old oak trees with very strange acorns indeed.

Once upon a time, there lived a group of oak trees atop a high, rounded hill. These were the only oak trees in the whole world and they looked pretty much like the oaks we see today except for one thing—they had square acorns. These trees had lived atop this hill for many years. One year a new oak tree popped out of the ground. It didn't look much different from any of the other oaks, that was until a few years later when it produced its first crop of acorns. Usually this was a proud moment for an oak tree but not this time for its acorns were not square, they were round. All the other trees just laughed. That fall, all the oaks dropped their acorns. The square acorns stayed on top of the hill as they always had, but some of the acorns from the new oak rolled down the hillside. The other oaks laughed again at the strange tree.



Round acorns.

Drawing by Barry Breckling.

Hunting Hollow 5K/10K Fun Run/Walk, 2016

Once again, the Hunting Hollow run/walk event was a big success this year. Hundreds of people of all ages, from 6 to 77, enjoyed a great day at Hunting Hollow. Full results and photos here: <http://coepark.net/pineridgeassociation/programs-events/annual-events/hh5k10kresults>.

Many thanks to all the visitors who came to enjoy the event and to all the park volunteers who worked hard to make it such a success. Special thanks to David Cartwright who has taken over running the event and is a worthy successor to Ken Howell.

See the following article about a winner with special Coe Park connections.



....And they're off!
Photo by Dave Raiman.

Third Time's a Charm for Tiffany Verbica

By Peter Coe Verbica

Tiffany Verbica of Felton, California was the female winner of the Henry W. Coe State Park 10K Run for the third year in a row. She completed the out and back trail run in Hunting Hollow in just over 48 minutes.

"The Coe Park volunteers this year were amazing," Tiffany shared with a smile. "Race materials were well organized, parking was flawless, fruit and aid stations were well stocked, new race director David Cartwright should be very proud."

"My husband grew up on a ranch in the San Felipe Valley just north of the park and his mom, Winnifred, lived at the Coe Ranch one summer, helping to work the cattle," Tiffany explained. "So it means a lot for us to be here and be part of the excitement."

Tiffany enjoyed her victory but said that the biggest victory was running with generations of family members.



Tiffany Verbica, first place, 10K Women's Division, shakes hands with race director David Cartwright.



Photos by Peter Coe Verbica.

From left to right;

David Cartwright, Coe Park volunteer and race director; Dan McCranie of Gilroy, age division medalist; Peter Coe Verbica, Henry W. Coe, Jr. great grandson and PRA board member; his daughter, Madeline Verbica, who represents the sixth generation of California natives.

News from the Board of the Pine Ridge Association

By Ron Erskine

The contract for the repair of the roof of the white barn has been approved. Work will hopefully begin by September.

With the generous grant funds in hand from Ladera Grill restaurant in Morgan Hill (see article below), the board discussed potential projects to undertake. The only clear condition of the grant is that it be used for interpretive activities and not for infrastructure. It was decided that the best source for potential projects is the Interpretive Master Plan that prioritizes a list of such project ideas. It is important that a State Park representative be present for this discussion, so the board is arranging a meeting with Pat Clark-Gray, Monterey District Interpretive Specialist.

Steve McHenry, Ron Erskine, and Diana Goodwin are up for election to the PRA board this year. A call for candidates will be provided in the next Ponderosa. The board also discussed a procedure to ensure that the election process is carried out in a timely manner.

Many friends of Coe Park (lapsed members, Hunting Hollow 5K/10K participants, other event attendees, etc.) are in various separate databases. The board discussed pulling all these names into one database where we can better reach out for support to more people than we currently do. Mark Madeiros will investigate options and report to the board.

PRA treasurer Cynthia Leeder (stand up and applaud for all she does!) reported that the PRA is in excellent financial condition:

Total current assets	\$204,281
Total assets	\$414,224
Total liabilities	\$1,494
Total equity	\$401,406

Through the first six months of 2016:

Total income	\$96,069
Total expenses	\$42,686
Net income	\$40,811

The Pine Ridge Association holds several marketable securities, most given as gifts, that are assets that may need to be more suitably invested. A finance committee is looking at options.

Park maintenance worker Eric Griggs has left the park. Mat Fuzie is no longer Monterey District Superintendent. Matt Bischoff is acting superintendent.

The next PRA board meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 13, at 6:30 pm in the meeting room in the Gilroy Public Library. All PRA members are invited to attend.

Ladera Grill Team Commits to Major Gift to the PRA

By Peter Coe Verbica

The team at Ladera Grill Restaurant in Morgan Hill has given a major gift of \$100,000 to the Pine Ridge Association at Henry W. Coe State Park. Coe Park, comprising over 87,000 acres, is Northern California's largest State Park and is visited by thousands of nature lovers each year. Ladera Grill, known as the premier dining destination in the South County, is led by executive chef Tony Garcia, sommelier and manager Susan Fugate Marsh, banquet and event manager Katrina Marsh, business manager Morgan McCranie, manager Rene Pere, and president and owner Dan McCranie.

According to Dan Benefiel, president of the PRA, "This major gift by the Ladera Grill team will ensure that funds are available to support educational and interpretive programs at Coe Park. It also complements the strong volunteer corps who do so much at the park, including restoration of springs and trails, rehabilitation of the Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs, the Hunting Hollow 5K/10K Fun Run and Walk, the Coe Backcountry Weekend, and so much more."

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Ladera Grill Team Commits to Major Gift to the PRA, continued....

Manny Pitta, chair of the Coe Park volunteer committee, Cynthia Leeder, PRA treasurer, Ron Erskine, Ken Howell, Mark Maderos, Laura Dominguez-Yon, Benefiel and others present at the PRA board meeting at which the gift was announced expressed their enthusiastic appreciation of this major gift to the PRA, and for Ladera Grill's leadership role. Other benefactors, such as the Morgan Hill Community Foundation and a large anonymous matching gift, have helped kick off rehabilitation of the White Barn at Coe Park's Pine Ridge visitor center.

Thanks to the Ladera Grill team and other generous supporters, the PRA and its volunteer-run organization will continue to thrive financially, and provide informative programs and great educational materials. With Coe Park's committed benefactors, uniformed volunteers, rangers and other park staff, and the PRA board, visitors will enjoy a high quality experience when they visit the park for years to come.

If you have an interest in making a gift to the park, need to renew your PRA membership, or volunteer, please visit www.coePark.net.

Time to Run for the PRA Board

The Pine Ridge Association will hold its annual election for the board of directors in December. The terms of three directors, at least two of whom are not running again, expire at the end of this year. Now is the time to prepare your candidacy statement and send it to Steve McHenry, 439 Chateau La Salle Drive, San Jose, CA 95111 or email, stephen.l.mchenry@gmail.com.

Any association member may run for the board. A member may also nominate another PRA member to serve on the board. To do this, send Steve 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 participate in carrying out tasks for the association. Meetings typically take place every other month on week-nights. 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 to send out PRA-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 25th**. Please send your statements to Steve 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 you have served the park or other volunteer activities that have benefited the public, any special qualifications or experience you have, and specific plans you have for improving the park as a board member.

If you have any questions about what it would be like to be a board member or if you would like additional guidance on putting together a candidacy statement, please call Steve McHenry at 408-286-8858.

Henry Coe State Park and Endurance Riding Go Hand In Hand

By Lori Oleson

First, a little history. Modern endurance riding in the United States began in 1955 when a man from Auburn, California put out the challenge to ride one hundred miles through the Sierra Nevada in less than twenty four hours. The ride began in Tahoe City and ended in Auburn during the summer harvest moon.

This ride, now known throughout the world as the Western States 100 or Tevis Cup, has been held every year since the inaugural ride by five men. Horse enthusiasts all over the world dream of earning the covenant buckle given to every finisher.

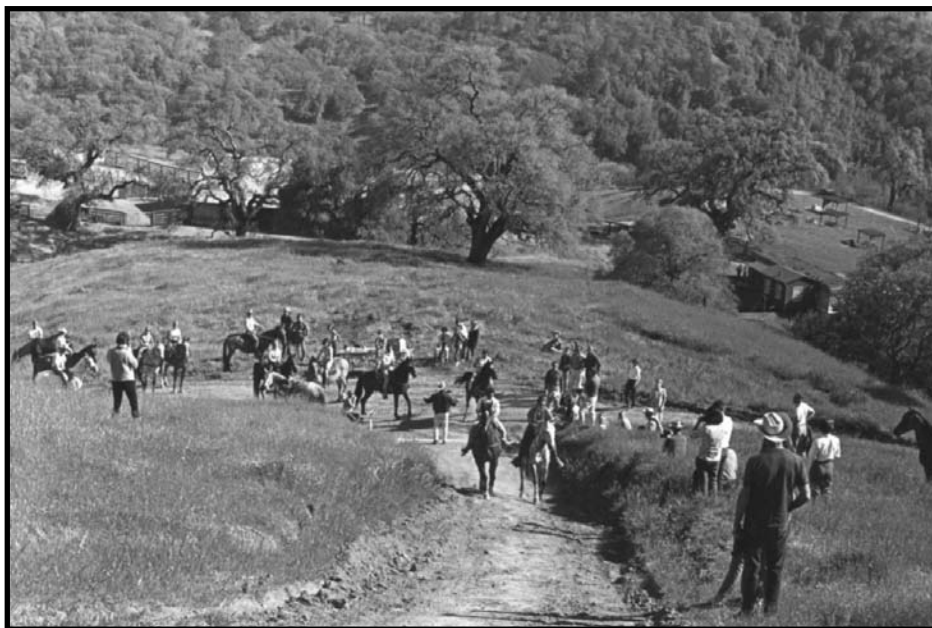
In the 1960s, participation in the Tevis Cup was increasing. Riders didn't want to wait a whole year before they were able to hit the Tevis trail so other rides started to pop up.

One of the very first rides in the country was held at Henry W. Coe State Park on May 14, 1967. The ride was named the Castle Rock Challenge Ride and base camp was located at the visitor center. Although the ride location changed after this first year, it was the beginning of an era. The Castle Rock Challenge Ride continued every year until May 2000. It was at the time the oldest, longest running fifty mile ride in the country.

The ride was founded by Julie Suhr, an iconic figure in the sport of endurance. She lived in the "Valley of the Heart's Delight" before it became "Silicon Valley." She first rode in the Tevis Cup in 1965 and was hooked. Since earning her first Tevis buckle, she went on to earn twenty-two buckles.

The Castle Rock Challenge Ride was planned for April 1967 but the weather had something to say. It snowed and the park was closed to the public. Frantically, management tried to contact all the registered riders but those coming from Nevada were already on their way. Management met the riders from Nevada to tell them the situation. They were good sports and turned to head home.

The ride was rescheduled for May and the registered riders from Nevada came all the way back to ride. According to Joan Throgmorton, the entrance parking lot at Coe Park was created in order to park all the horse trailers coming to the ride. The weather changed from snow in April to 90 degrees the weekend of the ride. Management was very happy with the turnout of twenty six riders. One of the original riders was our own Coe Park volunteer, Chere Bargar. Unlike the American Endurance Ride Conference requiring a minimum of fifty miles, this ride was less than thirty miles. (The American Endurance Ride Conference was not formed until 1972.)



The Starting line of the Castle Rock Challenge, 1967.
Photo by Charlie Barieau.

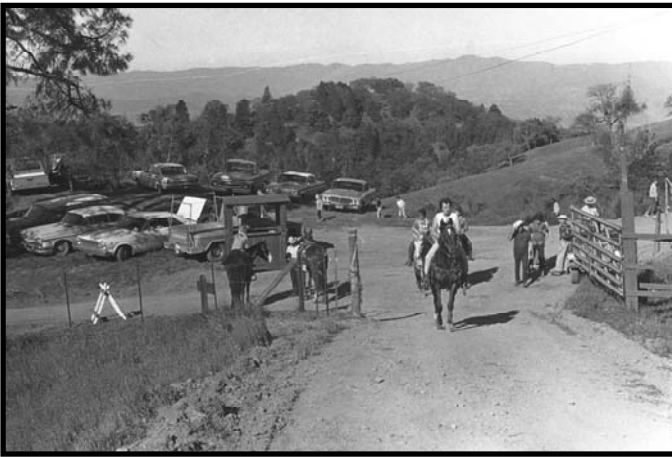
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Henry Coe State Park and Endurance Riding Go Hand In Hand, continued....

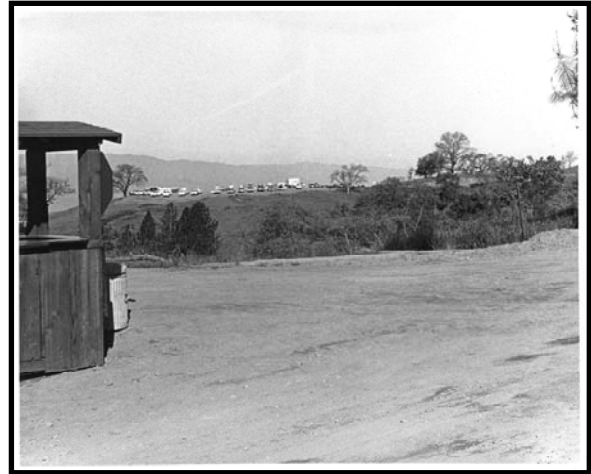
Charlie Barieau was a friend of the early Tevis Cup riders and loved the sport. He was a bachelor and was free to travel to all the rides that started popping up throughout the west. He was the only photographer present in the early years. Without Charlie, we would have no photographic record of rides in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Although the first Castle Rock Challenge was not a full fifty mile ride, many riders were hooked on the idea of endurance rides beyond the original one hundred mile Tevis Cup ride. The Castle Rock Challenge moved locations a couple of times in the first couple of years and became a full fifty mile trail ride in 1969.

It was a long time ago and things have changed a lot in the past forty nine years. Since that original Castle Rock Challenge, Henry Coe State Park has hosted other endurance rides in the 1990s and 2000s, including the Quicksilver Spring and Fall Classic and Just Coe Crazy.



Blanche Little, Adsum.



Entrance parking lot, newly created.

Photos by Charlie Barieau.

What Happened to Mother's Day Breakfast 2016?

By Sue Dekalb

We have been extremely lucky over the years on Mother's Day, weather sometimes chilly and damp, sometimes warm and sunny, but we've never had to cancel the Mother's Day Breakfast until this year.

The forecast for the day of the event looked reasonable but the days leading up to it were troublesome. We needed to get two heavy trailers out to the event, one with the mobile griddle and the other loaded with all the tables, propane tanks, bins, and equipment required. We decided to take the griddle out to the breakfast site early on Thursday as it was a requirement for the breakfast. Rain was predicted for Friday and we would need a fairly dry road to get the other heavy trailer out to the Ridgeview site on Saturday. If the road was too wet we would not be able to set up before the event.

The one thing that no-one could have predicted was the amount of rain that fell on Friday afternoon. Less than a half inch had been predicted but it rained all afternoon, dumping almost an inch in a few hours. The road was going to be impassable on the Saturday so we would not be able to do the required setup. Because some of the equipment had been set up at the Ridgeview site there was no way we could hold the event in the white barn even if the parking lots hadn't already been full of backpackers.

Continued on page 13....

Park Events and Information

Mark your calendars—important dates and other announcements

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

Moonlight Ride

Saturday, September 17

Stage at Hunting Hollow, potluck at 6pm, ride out at 7pm. For more information, visit www.coepark.net or call Chere Bargar 408-683-2247.

The Annual Tarantula Fest and BBQ

Saturday, October 1

Come to the Coe Park Tarantula Fest and rub elbows (so to speak) with some of our fuzzy, friendly eight-legged guests of honor. The event is held at the visitor center campground, which has breathtaking views across the ridges and canyons of the backcountry. With a meal ticket you can sit down and enjoy great home-cooked food at our barbecue. Take a leisurely nature walk with a volunteer naturalist and search for tarantulas or go on a geo-caching hike. Enjoy live music by the Sada Springs Jug Band made up of musical Coe Park volunteers and friends. Hang out at our kids' activities table and create Tarantula Fest keepsakes.



Raffle tickets go on sale August 16. All information including meal ticket sales is on the Coe Park website, www.coepark.net.

What Happened to Mother's Day Breakfast 2016?, continued....

Work on the event begins in January. All the food is purchased in advance and volunteers need to precook much of it prior to the event. Even with the possibility of rain in the forecast, we had to proceed as if the event would happen as expected. But it didn't. We had bins of parboiled potatoes and onions, parboiled sausage, packets of premixed biscuit ingredients, flowers, orange juice, coffee concentrate, and jams in place. Fortunately, we were able to donate all parboiled foods and coffee to St. Joseph's Family Center in Gilroy. Volunteer Bob Kass distributed the cut flowers to a senior center in Los Gatos. All the other leftover food was used at other PRA events like Ranch Day and the Coit Camp Equestrian Outing.

Because all the tickets were sold through PayPal we were able to notify everyone via email that the event had been canceled. Many volunteers put heart and soul into making Mother's Day Breakfast a success and it was really sad to see all that work go for naught. The park missed out on the gate fees, the visitor center missed out on sales, the PRA missed out on revenue from ticket sales, and the rest of us missed out on a great breakfast, good fun, and good company.

Many thanks to all the volunteers and staff who worked on the event. It's too bad we had to cancel but we hope to see you all next year!



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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 Manny Pitta, mannypitta@gmail.com.

Please send submissions and ideas to the editor at: PRAnewsletter2@gmail.com

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