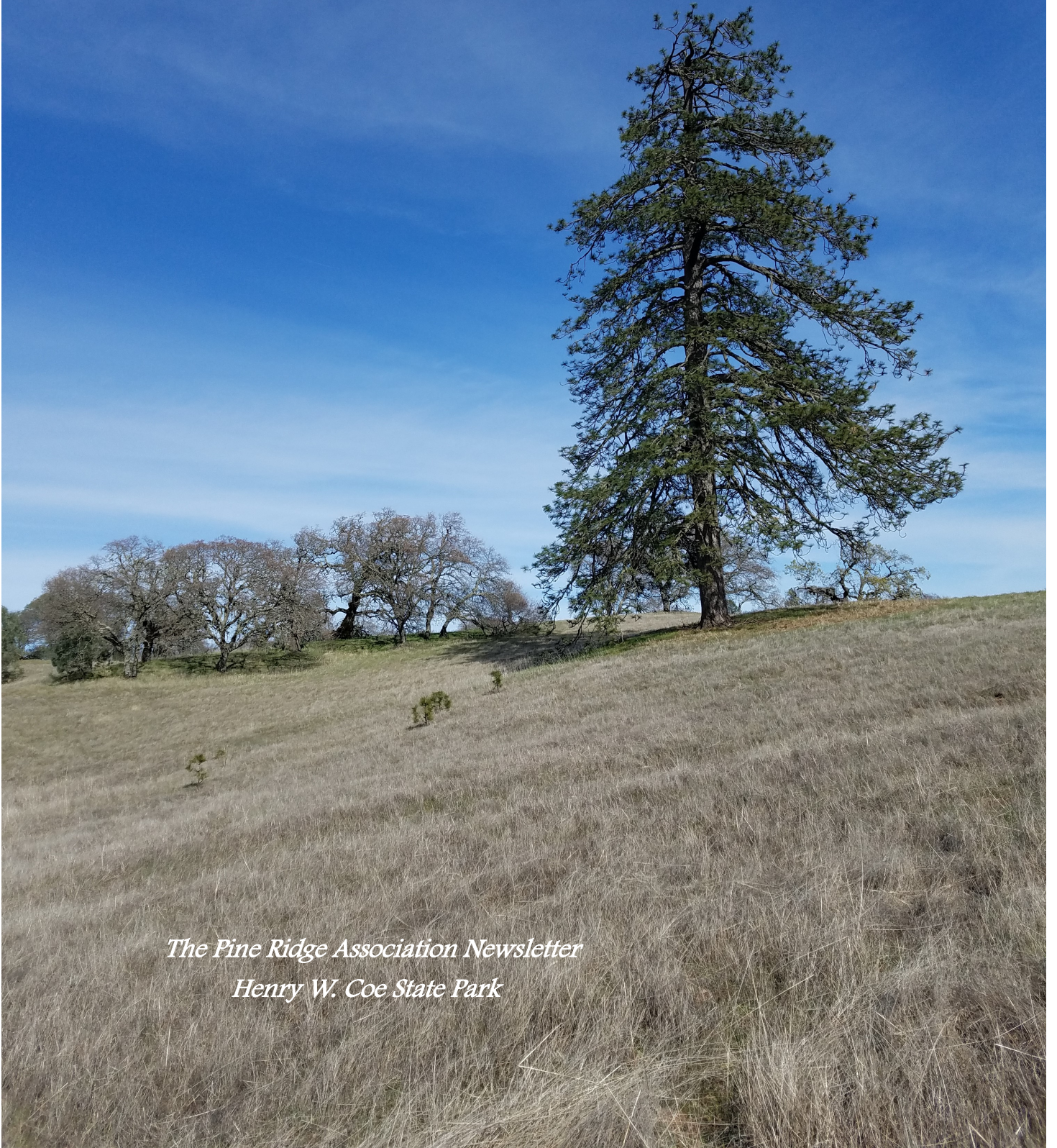


# The Ponderosa ~ Summer 2018



*The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter*  
*Henry W. Coe State Park*

# The Quien Sabe Volcanic Field

By Teddy Goodrich, Historian, PRA

The peaks of the Quien Sabe volcanic field provide a dramatic profile on the horizon south of Pacheco Pass. Some peaks are visible from park headquarters; all can be seen on the trail to the monument. They are perhaps most dramatic seen from the Burra Burra Trail near the Dowdy Ranch. They were formed between nine and eleven million years ago, but it is their names and human history, not their geologic history, I find most fascinating.

Beginning at the southernmost point, very close to Pacheco State Park and in Merced County is Mt. Ararat, named for the peak in Armenia where Noah's ark is said to have come to rest. An unnamed peak and Cathedral Peak are next, the latter named because its shape is said to resemble the interior of a cathedral. It is followed by Mariposa Peak, Spanish for butterfly.

Pacheco Peak, the only peak in Santa Clara County, looms above Pacheco Pass, due south of Bell's Station. It was named for either Juan Perez Pacheco or his father, Francisco Pacheco, grantees of the Ausaymas y San Felipe Grant, 1833-1836 and the San Luis Gonzaga Grant, 1843.

An unnamed peak and Laveaga Peak follow. The De Laveaga family were owners of the Quien Sabe Ranch for many years. Laveaga Peak is followed by three more unnamed peaks before Antimony Peak, named for several antimony mines nearby. Potrero, Spanish for pasture, is next.

Henrietta Peak is definitely my favorite. It was apparently named for Henrietta Eveglia, who with her husband, Frank, ran Frank's Place, a saloon in Tres Pinos for forty years, 1890 to 1930. The saloon, still in the original 1890s building, is now known as the 19<sup>th</sup> Hole. How many women, especially 19<sup>th</sup> century immigrants from Italy, have a peak named for them?

A prominence on Henrietta Peak is called Santa Ana Point. It was named for the Santa Ana y Quien Sabe Grant given to Manuel Larios and Juan Miguel Anzar in April, 1836. Henrietta Peak is followed by San Joaquin Peak, located within Rancho San Joaquin. Also called the Rosa Morado Grant, it was given to Cruz Cervantes in 1836. Last are the three sisters, which were probably so named because they are a cluster of similar shaped peaks.

There is more than ranching history in these hills. A flurry of mining activity took place beginning in the late 1860s and early 1870s, most of it near Antimony and Cathedral Peaks. Prospectors searching for antimony and quicksilver filed a number of claims: the Blue Wing, Gypsy, Stayton, Yellow Jacket, Ambrose, Lone Tree, Shriver, and the Quien Sabe. There are also several unnamed prospects. Their potential was so exciting that a road was proposed from Hollister to the Stayton Mine in the mid-1870s. In July 1875, the Sacramento Daily Union announced that the Consolidated Wonder Quicksilver Mining Company had been formed with a capital stock of \$5,000,000 in shares of \$100 each. This was quickly followed by another announcement in September 1875, of the formation of the Salinas Quicksilver Mining Company with a capital stock of \$2,000,000 in shares of \$100 each. A community of about 60 people, presumably miners and their families, formed near the Stayton Mine and was called, appropriately, Staytonville. A post office was opened there in May, 1877, but closed abruptly in July 1878. The big expectations for success and wealth didn't happen. By 1880 the mining operations in the area had closed down. Some would open again, sporadically, until the early years of World War II.

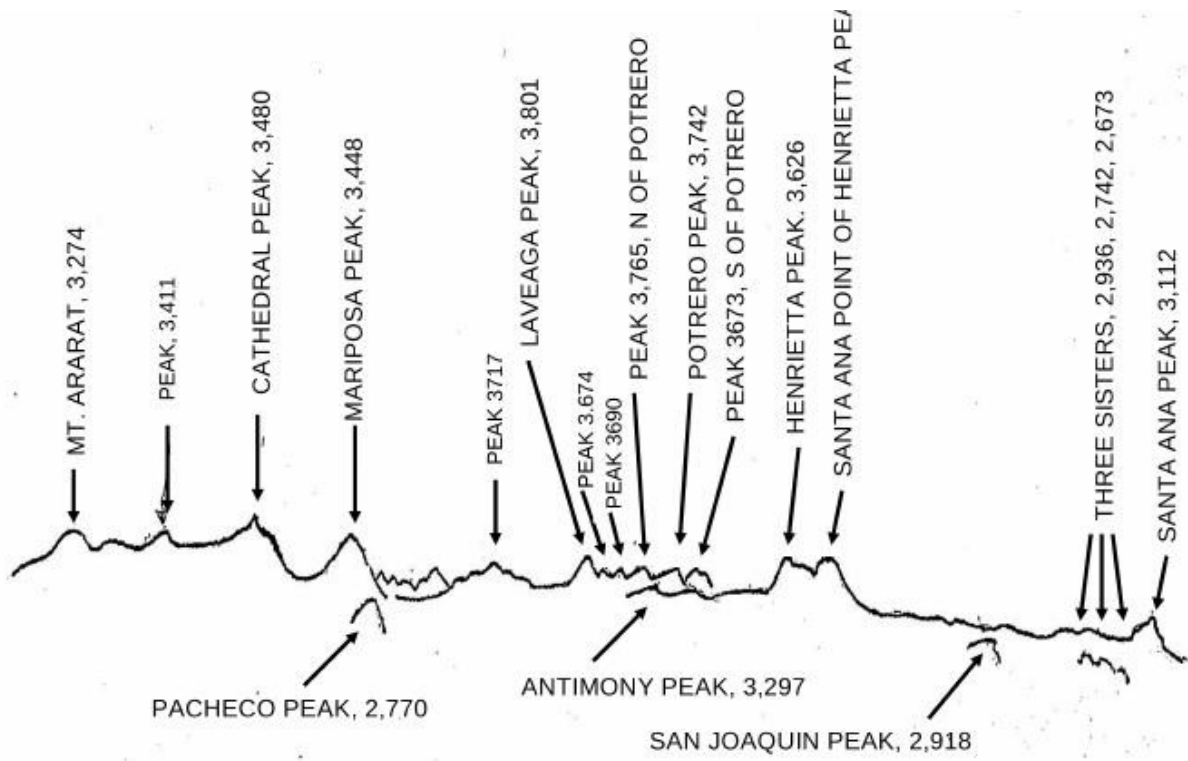
The next time you hike to Frog Lake or spend some time at the Dowdy, take along a profile of the peaks so you can identify them as you walk.

The drawing on the next page was provided by Winslow Briggs.

The photo was provided by Michael Ingrassia.

Continued on page 3...

# The Quien Sabe Volcanic Field, continued...



# Connections

By Barry Breckling

Back in the late 1800s, Henry W. Coe Jr. probably knew Andrew P. Hill, the well-known photographer and artist from San Jose. Coe was also familiar with the Thomas family who homesteaded property west of Coe Park. Although Andrew P. Hill probably never met any members of the Thomas family, there's an interesting connection that ties them together.

Henry W. Coe Jr. took up a homestead in Cold Valley (which was later renamed Cold Flat), and his brother had a homestead a little to the west on the side of Blue Ridge. In order to establish a viable cattle ranch, the brothers decided they needed more land. Henry had his eye on some good grazing land on the east side of Cold Valley, but circumstances prevented him from obtaining the land at the time.

Coe was good friends with Preston Thomas when Preston lived on Oak Flat Ranch, the homestead of his father Eleazar Thomas. (Oak Flat Ranch is in the long, pretty valley you drive through along the road about three miles below Coe Park.) Preston Thomas wanted to buy land of his own, and he took up a homestead on the very land Coe had been hoping to acquire in Cold Valley. When Coe found out what Thomas had done, he was outraged. Back in the 1970s, Preston's son, Leon Thomas, told us the story of how Coe reacted to what he considered a betrayal of friendship.

Incidentally, Leon was one of the first members of the PRA board of directors and the first PRA meeting was held at his house. Leon also used to come up to the park to give evening programs about the area's ranching history.

Leon, just a young boy at the time, recalled Coe galloping up to the Thomases' Oak Flat ranch house. Coe skidded his horse to a stop in front of the ranch house, causing rocks to clatter on the walls of the building. Preston and Leon came outside, and Leon watched as Coe, sitting silently on his horse, glared at Preston for about five minutes, according to Leon's estimate. Not a word was spoken. Finally Coe wheeled his horse around and left. Shortly after that encounter, to spite Thomas, Coe sold his Cold Valley land to a gun club. The Laurel Springs Gun Club still owns Coe's original homestead land.

Speaking of Cold Flat, we made an interesting find there. Teddy Goodrich and I had wanted to know where the Coe's homestead cabin once stood. We approached members of the Laurel Springs Gun Club and got permission to look for the cabin.

We have an interesting old photo of a painting of Cold Flat. The cabin in the picture is said to be Coe's cabin. Using the photo, we searched for the cabin site but were unable to find it.

Several months later, Teddy and I made a second trip, but this time our search party included Bob Patrie, who had served on the PRA board along with Leon Thomas. Bob brought a metal detector and some 1881 survey papers that note the cabin's distance from a survey line. Again, we started our search based on the photo, but the photo just didn't work. Bob checked the survey information and concluded that the cabin should be somewhere to the west. But the area in question, a somewhat narrow, picturesque canyon, seemed an unlikely location for a cabin. Up in the canyon on a small flat area, we found a pile of rocks that looked like the piles of rocks we've found at other cabin sites, the remains of an old chimney. Bob got out his metal detector and was able to pick out a rectangular cabin-sized metal debris field, nails left from a burned down or dismantled cabin. The mystery was solved.

Now, back to the Thomas family.

In the late 1990s, when the state was attempting to purchase the Coit and Gill Mustang properties, members of the Thomas family approached the PRA and state officials to see if the state would be interested in purchasing their Cold Flat property, an extraordinary 1,100-acre tract of land north of Coe Park. The land touches Coe Park at only one infinitely small point.

Continued on page 5...

## Connections, continued...

State officials and members of the Pine Ridge Association were invited to tour the property on a beautiful spring day. All participants were enormously impressed by the beauty of the landscape and the fine park qualities the property had to offer. At the time, State Senator Alfred E. Alquist was working on a bill that would appropriate money for the purchase of the Coit and the Gill Mustang properties, and the PRA wanted to add the Thomas property to the bill. Alquist's people told state officials and the PRA not to try to add the Thomas property to the bill; they argued that including the property might weaken the bill's prospects. The PRA disregarded the warning and pushed for the addition, and Bob Patrie testified about the value of the addition before an assembly committee. In the end, the Thomas property was purchased along with the Coit and Gill Mustang properties.

Although the Thomas addition is not accessible to the public, the land is protected for all time, and I'm sure we'll eventually be able to make it accessible.

In 1899 Andrew P. Hill took photographs of a fire in the redwoods near Los Gatos, and he sold the photos to a British magazine. The magazine commissioned Hill to get more photographs of the giant coast redwoods. Shortly afterwards, Hill took the train from San Jose to Felton, lugged his heavy equipment into a beautiful grove of old-growth redwoods, and began taking pictures. Before long the owner of the property came upon Hill and demanded that Hill give him the glass negatives of the pictures he'd taken. Hill was so angered by the incident that he began thinking about how to make the redwood forests part of the public domain. On his second photography attempt, Hill went deeper into the redwoods, into an area called Big Basin. He took many photos and was so awed by the forest that he set out in earnest to protect the magnificent trees. He and friends started the Sempervirens Club, an organization that has been spectacularly successful in saving large areas of the coastal redwood forests.

Hill garnered help from many influential people in the fight to protect the redwoods, and a bill was introduced in the state legislature that would provide \$250,000 for purchasing redwood forests. The night before the vote on the bill was going to be taken, it became clear that the bill did not have enough votes to pass. At midnight that night, Hill walked three miles from Santa Clara to the Herald newspaper office in San Jose. The newspaper editor published a special edition that included some of Hill's photographs of redwood groves. Hill boarded a train for Sacramento at 4:30 a.m., armed with copies of the newspaper edition. Before the legislature met that morning, Hill had placed a copy of the newspaper on each legislator's desk. The bill passed unanimously, and the first California state park, California Redwood Park, was born. In 1927 the name was changed to Big Basin Redwoods State Park. Years later, the very grove of trees that Hill had been kicked out of became part of Henry Cowell Redwood State Park.

On December 14, 2000, George Thomas called me on the phone. George is one of Preston Thomas's four sons, younger brother of Leon Thomas. (Another son, Gene Thomas, once worked as a resource ecologist for state parks.)

George told me that he had a large oil painting that had previously hung behind the bar in the Madrone saloon for many years. The saloon had been owned by one of George's relatives, Pat Kirby. The painting was removed from the saloon, and it eventually ended up in George's possession. George had considered giving the painting to the Morgan Hill Historical Society. Besides being a PRA board member, George's brother Leon had been a member of the Morgan Hill Historical Society for many years. But George thought it might also be appropriate for the painting to reside at Coe Park.

Continued on page 6...

## Connections, continued...

Ranger Nedra Martinez and I drove to George Thomas's house in Morgan Hill. He showed us a large oil painting in a massive frame leaning against the back of a couch in a dark corner. And we immediately concluded that it was an impressive piece of art. The painting was of some fine looking Hereford bulls standing in a sycamore-lined stream. In the background were more cattle and a few cowboys. In the middle of the picture were a couple of cowboys that looked strangely familiar. Nedra and I could just barely make out the name of the artist in a dark corner of the painting. The artist was Andrew P. Hill, and before long we learned that the two familiar cowboys in the middle of the picture were Henry W. Coe Jr. and his brother Charles.

The painting hangs in the dining room of Coe Park's Visitor Center.



# My “Coe-Off-Trail” Shoes

By Elena Armstrong

There is no bad time to hike at Coe, and every season brings its own experiences. As temperatures rise and spring moves into summer, the green grass turns into a beautiful golden brown, making me think of fur on a mountain lion.

Yet up close, summer grasses at Coe are not as soft as they look from a distance and rather annoying for those of us who wander away from well-maintained trails

I tried various ways to keep burs and sharp seeds out of my shoes and socks. Full-leather boots - too hot and heavy for summer. Sturdy nylon gaiters are also hot, and most of the foxtails still manage to get under and in.

“There must be a better way”, I kept thinking. Could a gaiter cover the entire shoe and not just the sock? Could it be lighter and attached to the shoe?

Finally, I drew a simple pattern on brown packing paper, traced it onto light-weight but dense-woven cotton canvas and sewed shoe covers.

After some practice with a stitching awl, I hand-stitched the covers to my light running shoes (mostly made out of mesh), converting trail shoes to “Coe-off-trail” shoes.

I couldn't wait for a weekend to field-test my invention. It worked great!!!

Earlier I would think twice before stepping off trail to pick up a piece of trash accidentally dropped by a visitor, but not anymore...



# Creatures of Coe - California Legless Lizard

By Joseph Belli



Photo by: Gary Nafis

If you grouped the lizards of Coe into categories based on the frequency with which they're encountered, it would go something like this: commonly seen (Western fence lizard), occasionally seen (Southern alligator lizard, Western whiptail), infrequently seen (Blainville's horned lizard, Western skink). For the last of Coe's seven lizards, there needs to be a special category: almost never seen, and when sighted, often misidentified. That species is the California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*).

California legless lizards are found from the East Bay south to Baja California. Their distribution is highly spotty, however, for there are many areas within their range where they've never been documented. Nearby, for example, there are numerous records from the Antioch Dunes, Pinnacles National Park, and around Fort Ord, but little else. In Coe I am aware of one single sighting, near the Orestimba Corral. As for myself, I've never come across one.

Legless lizards need loose soils such as sands or loams, and are absent from the heavy clay soils which are predominant in the park. They also use leaf litter, and seem to prefer a little moisture in the soil. In Coe, the best habitats are probably the floodplains of creeks such as Coyote Creek and Orestimba Creek, where loose soil and leaf litter are common.

A number of lizards and snakes use burrows; legless lizards go a step further by burying themselves and "swimming" through the substrate. They can disappear in a matter of seconds, and spend most of their time just beneath the surface or hidden beneath leaves. This explains why they're not often seen, even in areas where they're common. Prime habitat may contain hundreds of lizards per acre, but their subterranean lifestyle keeps them hidden. If you're fortunate to come across one, you'll see what looks like a very small snake, 7-10 inches long and no wider than a pen, a shiny-looking reptile that's silver to black on top and creamy yellow underneath, with tiny, beady eyes and a blunt tail.

\*

The term 'legless lizard' may seem like an oxymoron and remind you of the Cheesecake Conundrum: why do they call it cake when it looks like pie? For our purposes, what's the difference between legless lizards and snakes anyway? Aren't snakes just lizards without legs? Which came first, lizards or snakes?

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## Creatures of Coe - California Legless Lizard, continued...

Delving into the last question involves a look into the fossil record, where snakes first made an appearance over 100 million years ago. Though the record is far from complete—the small bones of snakes don't fossilize well—it's universally accepted that lizards appear far earlier in time than snakes. There were two schools of thought about how snakes arose. One suggested snakes evolved from aquatic reptiles, gradually losing their fins and becoming terrestrial. That theory was always a dark horse, and, with scant evidence to back it up, has fallen out of favor. The prevailing notion is that snakes evolved from lizards.

To many, that might seem like a step backwards: once you've developed legs, what possible advantages could there be to losing them? The flaw in that line of thought, which I still need to remind myself of now and then, is that evolution is not a linear, goal-oriented path, striving to produce a higher life form; it's about what works best given the conditions a species faces. Thus, bigger isn't always better than smaller; being warm-blooded (endothermic) isn't necessarily superior to being cold-blooded (ectothermic), and having legs isn't always preferable to being limbless. In snakes and legless lizards, limbs are a hindrance to traveling through burrows and tight crevices, and with elongated bodies, they can move faster and more efficiently by slithering. Meanwhile, the lack of appendages doesn't stop many snakes from climbing or swimming.

Yet legs didn't disappear just once, when snakes broke away from lizards eons ago. Evolutionary biologists have documented at least 24 instances in which a line of lizards lost its limbs, all across the globe, but only once did snakes result. The rest remained lizards of one sort or another—worm lizards, glass lizards, and legless lizards. That brings us to the nitty-gritty: what makes a legless lizard a lizard rather than a snake? How are snakes and lizards different?

Lizards differ from snakes in a number of ways, some noticeable, others obscure. Lizards have eyelids; snakes don't—their eyes are protected by a transparent scale. Snakes have flexible lower jaws, enabling them to swallow items much larger than their head; lizards don't have flexible jaws and can't handle larger prey. Snakes can't lose their tail, and while not all lizards have the ability to drop theirs, many do. Legless lizards also have bodies longer than tails, while snakes have tails longer than bodies. This begs another question: where does the body end and the tail begin for legless lizards and snakes? You can't really tell unless you turn them over and view the underside, which will have a slit called the cloaca, the all-purpose opening used for mating, laying eggs (or giving live birth), and excreting waste. Anything below the cloaca is considered the tail.

There are gray areas as well—for example, most lizards have ear openings, while snakes don't. Legless lizards, however, are an exception; they, like snakes, lack ear holes. Another less than absolute difference is the tongue. Snakes use theirs for chemoreception, to detect scent, while lizards use their longer, fleshier tongues for capturing prey. There are exceptions here as well, for some lizards, including, again, legless lizards, use their tongues in the same manner as snakes.

\*

Contemplating the differences between snakes and lizards, as well as their evolutionary history, was a lot for my mind to process, and one night, I found myself up later than usual, trying to grasp it all. As I stared toward the cosmos, I tried to simplify things: snakes are, after all, a kind of legless lizard, but legless lizards aren't snakes. Further, there are numerous examples of lizards without legs, but there are no snakes with legs, and while evolution can wander back and forth on a lot of traits over the long haul, leg lessness so far has been a one-way street: once they disappear, they don't come back. Maybe it's for the best, then, that I've never seen a legless lizard. If I did, it would have a lot of explaining to do.

# In Memoriam - Henry Rocha Jr.

By Ron Erskine

I was shocked and extremely saddened to hear of the passing of Henry Rocha, a volunteer for many years at Coe. I can think of no sweeter or gentler soul. Henry and I worked on several activities at the Park: building the music stage for the Tarantula-Fest for several years, and numerous carpentry projects and various odds and ends. But I knew him best as a softball teammate in Gilroy for many years. In an environment where men often acted poorly, puffing their chests and letting testosterone run amok, Henry always managed to be 'one of the guys' but with a gentle, quiet, yet joyful manner. If you knew Henry, you liked him. Adieu, Henry. You are gone too soon.

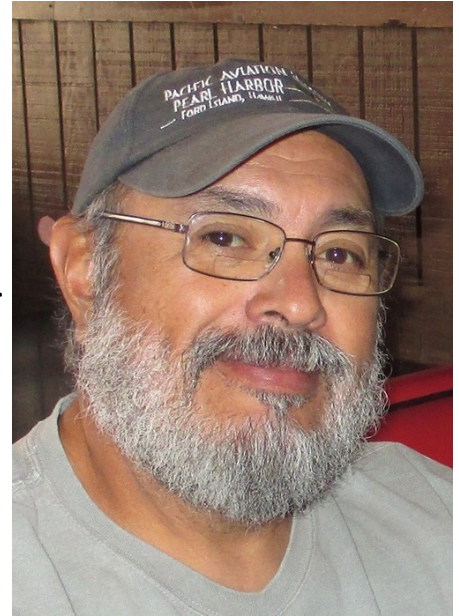


Photo courtesy of Gilroy Dispatch

## New PRA 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.

Patrick and Patrick Saxton, Santa Clara CA  
Mas and Joyce Sato, San Jose CA  
Jason and Morgan Mabery, Pleasanton CA  
Haruko Kawasaki, Los Angeles CA  
Jean Okuye, Livingston CA  
Paul and Bobbie Ueunten, San Jose CA  
Sarah Mansergh, Freedom CA  
Susan Nakamura and Masao Suzuki, San Jose CA  
Robbin Kawabata, Los Altos CA  
Dick Peery, Palo Alto CA  
Susan Tanaka, San Francisco CA  
Ben and Felipa Toshiyui, Washington UT  
Marlene Shigematsu, Morgan Hill CA  
Priscila Leni, Mountain View CA  
Tara Lee, San Jose CA  
Lisa Politeo, San Jose CA  
Pat Potter McAndrews and Butch Kittle, San Jose CA  
John Parker, Campbell CA

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

# Anniversary Project Work at Coe

By Sue Dekalb

There has been some real progress made on the anniversary project work taking place at HQ. We are still plagued with trying to buy material when there is no money available, but we have managed to get some work done anyway. The PRA had money available for Visitor Center improvements, so we were able to buy things for the VC using that money.

The front of the VC has been cleaned and painted, and the windows were re-glazed on the front wall. New windows were ordered for the rest of the VC and they arrived on July 16<sup>th</sup>. It will take a while to get all the windows in the VC replaced, but a maintenance crew from the state will be working on that. Hopefully some volunteers can help with this task as well.

Once the windows are replaced we can start repairing and painting the rest of the VC, as it needs a lot of work.

Hopefully some of you have been up to HQ and have seen the new handrail that we put in. The old one was falling apart and loose. The new one is a thing of beauty. Thanks to Art Pon for doing the bulk of the build on the new handrail and for estimating and purchasing the redwood for the job. Don Clare, John Jenkins, and Sue Dekalb also helped with removing the old posts and concrete and setting the new posts.

We also got the downspouts painted (front wall only) and the water piped away from the foundation. There are still a few things needed for the gutter so it doesn't drip all over you when it rains, but we will get to them.

Teddy and Patrick Goodrich painted the camping self-registration board and Iron Ranger, and Linda Keahey painted the map box so the front of the VC is almost completed. A few windows on the front of the VC still need to be reinstalled and painted, but the tile floor has been sealed. Hopefully this will keep the water outside this winter. Rick Hentges (HQ Maintenance) fixed the front doors so they close properly and are sealed against the weather.

In the coming weeks, you will see scaffolding appear around the VC as the process of replacing the old windows begins. All the siding on the VC will need to be removed and reinstalled after repairs are made. It will probably take at least 3 months to get the new windows installed, and it will all depend on how much help Rick Hentges gets.

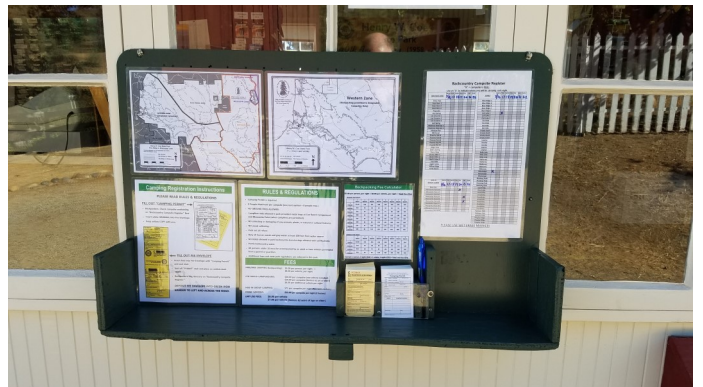
If you can help with any of the VC work, including the eventual painting, please come up to HQ on Tuesdays. Rick will be able to give you some work to do whether or not I am up there. I will try and send out a reminder before each Tuesday work day, but even if you don't see the email, please come up and help.



Photos by Sue Dekalb

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## Anniversary Project Work at Coe, continued...



# Yellow Star Thistle - Pig Connection

By Sue Dekalb

Common sites for Yellow Star Thistle in the park, especially in the southern end near Hunting Hollow, are large areas dug up by pigs. This happens in varying degrees each winter and spring, as the pigs dig up grubs and other snacks while the soil is moist. I expect that many people don't really think much about these areas, but when I see them, I wonder just how much damage has really been caused.

The pigs do a marvelous job of tilling the soil, sometimes much better than a rototiller. They can turn over the soil in an entire meadow. Many of the native grasses, plants, and small trees get destroyed in this process, but other more aggressive plants move right in and take over.

This year has been an extremely bad year for pigs, at least in the Hunting Hollow area. Most of the meadows were completely turned over allowing Italian Thistle, Mustard, Tocalote, and of course my favorite, Yellow Star Thistle, (YST for short) to take over those areas and thrive. All of these invasive weeds love disturbed soil.

YST has been around a very long time, as it was first collected in Oakland, California around 1869, probably in contaminated alfalfa seed shipped from southern Europe. It first appeared in Coe at Hunting Hollow shortly after that part of the park was opened to the public. I remembered seeing it on the roads where base rock had been spread to fill squirrel holes. As they say, 'No good deed goes unpunished'. Looking back at my photos from 2003, almost all of them contained YST and it got worse each year as it was left unchecked.

YST crowds out native species because it develops a large tap root that can steal moisture from surrounding plants. Many very large plants can produce over 75,000 seeds. Ninety-five percent of seed is viable shortly after dispersal. Most seeds germinate within a year, but they can remain viable in the soil for many years.

Much of the seed that germinated this year had been buried in the soil for years until the pigs dug it up. We have been fighting the battle with YST in Hunting Hollow and other areas of the park for many years. The plants are sprayed several times, and then any remaining new plants are pulled by hand once they begin to flower. This year we sprayed much more in the pig damaged areas than we did last year. I have noticed much more YST coming up this year because of the pigs. Controlling the pig population is essential to eliminating YST from Hunting Hollow and other areas of the park.

This year so far the following volunteers have helped pull YST: Sue Dekalb, Ted Tawshunsky, Art Pon, Debbie Cottingham, Dan Healy, John Thatcher, Rick Casey, Bonnie Doran, and Chris Weske. Hopefully we have a few more crews going out over the summer.

If you see herds of pigs in the park, you should report the location and details to the Environmental Scientist for Coe Park, Susan Ferry [susan.ferry@parks.ca.gov](mailto:susan.ferry@parks.ca.gov). You can also report pigs and YST patches to [Trail-reports@coepark.net](mailto:Trail-reports@coepark.net). We depend on volunteers to report where YST is seen so we can remove it from those areas.



YST Work Day 7/12/18  
Art Pon, Rick Casey, John Thatcher, Ted Tawshunsky



JDT E-Conn and Middle Steer Ridge 7/13/18  
Duddy

Photos by: Sue Dekalb

# SPLAT and Who We Are

By Paul Liebenberg

Most uniformed volunteers at Henry W Coe State Park have heard of the acronym/mnemonic “SPLAT” and are aware that it pertains to those interested in maintaining the park’s trails and springs. To further clarify for those readers of the Ponderosa who may be unfamiliar with this term, it is the informal group connection of the park’s official “Trails and Springs Volunteer Planning Committee” (TASVPC)

When I became the Chair of the TASVPC’s “Springs Sub-committee,” I needed a stand-out name for a group site where there was a single point of communication. After several other considerations “Springs, Ponds, Lakes and Trails” was born, with “Springs” taking precedence since it is my only “official” maintenance duty as a volunteer at the park. The private group “SPLAT\_at\_Coe” was started at Yahoo dot com and is open to uniformed volunteers and park staff.

Our official staff liaison for the TASVPC is Ranger Cameron Bowers; he and several other rangers and maintenance/resource personnel participate in SPLAT. We have 52 group members monitoring the group (5 from staff) of which a “bakers dozen” come out to help on a regular basis, or only about 10% of Coe’s total active uniformed volunteer roster.

Despite “Springs, Lakes, Ponds...” coming first, the SPLAT volunteers spend the greatest amount of time maintaining (and sometimes building) Coe’s trails. Clearing brush, fallen trees and clogged drainage features is never ending on Coe’s 300+ miles of trails and roads. There are several hundred trail marker posts needing repair/installation. We spend hundreds of hours trying to keep invasive species in check, and this year we have done much work trying to get the buildings in Coe’s headquarters area ready for the upcoming 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

We are hoping that the park can find operational funding soon for its SWECO trail machine, a small bulldozer designed for trail work. For those curious, SWECO is an acronym for Sutter Welding Equipment Co. The last time it was used for trail maintenance at Coe was in 2012 (on the Bowl Trail) but it did do work for new trail construction in 2015 (at the very top of the Jim Donnelly Trail).

Volunteering with SPLAT is great exercise, and the camaraderie is wonderful. Everybody can work at their own speed (the average age of the “baker’s dozen” is around 66) and abilities. On-the-job training is free of charge. As the cowboy Roy Rogers would sing, “Happy Trails...”!

## SPLAT Accomplishments (so far) for 2018

China Hole Trail	(Brushing and slide fix 3 days)
Burra Burra Trail	(Mowed and brushed)
Hersman Pond Trail	(Mowed and brushed)
Coit Spring System	(2000’ pipe trenched and installed)
Coit Horse Camp	(Replacement water tank)
Grizzly Gulch	(Brush and tread work 3 days)
Pacheco Camp	(Clean cabin and surrounding area)
Sada’s Spring	(New trough, brushing and tread work)
Deer Horn Spring	(New trough, spring box and piping)
Fish and Game Trail	(Remove dead trees)
Cougar Trail	(Brush and remove dead trees 2 days)
Creekside Trail	(Brush and tread work)
Flat Frog	(Brush and remove poison oak 2 days)
Frog Lake Trail	(Fix slide)
Forest Trail	(Brush, tread work, and poison oak)
Alquist	(Brush and weed whack)
Orestimba Creek Trail	(Weed whack)
James Spring Trail	(Weed whack)
Dowdy	(Weed whack)
Bell Station	(Weed whack)
Walsh Peak	(Brush and tread work)
Mississippi Creek Trail	(Brush, tread work, bypass slide 4 days)
Mustang Cutoff	(Mowed and brushed)

Continued on page 15...

## SPLAT and Who We Are, continued...

### SPLAT Accomplishments (so far) for 2018

Woodpecker Trail	(Mowed and brushed)
Max Corral Trail	(Mowed and brushed)
Scherrer Trail	(Mowed, brushed and tread work)
Tie Down Trail	(Mowed, brushed and tread work)
Jim Donnelly Trail	(Brush and drain work)
Coit Springs Road	(Weed whack)
Ridgeview Campground	(Weed Whack for MDB)
Springs Trail	(Weed whack for MDB)
Monument Trail	(Replace old bench with new one)
Mississippi Ridge Trail	(Brush and tread work 3 days)
Hunting Hollow Road	(Brush for 10K)
Willow Ridge Trail	(Brush, tread, and poison oak)
HQ Anniversary Work	(Paint, seal, caulk, glaze 24 days)
Dutch's Trail	(Mowed and brushed)
Purple Pond Trail	(Trees removed and brushed)
Yellow Jacket Trail	(Mowed and brushed)



SPLAT crew using logs to block off a social trail. L to R Bob Kass, Jodie Keahey, Kelly Kersten, Sue Dekalb, Rick Casey, Art Pon, Jesus Valdez and Dan Healy. Photo by Paul Liebenberg



Cougar Trail tree removal. Joe Fabiny finishes the cut. Photo by Sue Dekalb

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## SPLAT and Who We Are, continued...



Art Pon and Don Clare carry a water trough destined for Willow Tree Spring. Photo by Paul Liebenberg



Sweco tractor working on Bowl Trail near Willson Camp. Photo by Paul Liebenberg



Willow Ridge Trail July 19th brushing crew; Art Pon, Jesus Valdez, Bob Kass, Rick Casey, Dan Healy and Paul Liebenberg. Photo by Sue Dekalb



# Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs - Update

By Laura Dominguez-Yon

We are choosing to celebrate a few people who have dedicated their lives to Gilroy Hot Springs.

We began by dedicating “Henry’s Tree” at the May 19<sup>th</sup> event in memory of Henry K Kato (1920-2018) who managed the resort from 1950 until it closed in 1967 and consulted for the subsequent owners from 1967-2016. His favorite tree was a lone madrone among the oaks, apparently bent with “arms” outstretched to grasp the light filtering down the hillside. Henry showed volunteer Gael Troughton this tree.

Gael said, “He did tell me about his tree, a red-barked madrone, along a grown-over trail he had blazed many decades ago that ran along the slope of the hill below the Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania Cabins down to the hot spring gazebo. His tree was along that trail. It was a scraggly, leaning over tree, that was growing amongst the vegetation and below the oaks and other trees. It wasn't a robust tree because it was trying to grow in a shaded area, but it was there doing its best to survive. Henry took a liking to that tree because it was leaning over and growing along the trail he blazed.”



Photo courtesy of Gael Troughton

At our upcoming September 29<sup>th</sup> event, we’ll honor five other people: Will McDonald, Emily McDonald, H. K. Sakata, Steve Knepper, and Russ Mabery by dedicating Will’s Swimming Tank, Emily’s Home, Sakata’s Onsen, Steve’s Kiss, and Russ’s Dream in memory of each of them. Come and find out more about who they were and what part of GYHS was special to each of them!

I received special gifts from the Sakata and the McDonald/Lundblade families the last week of July. I had a most enjoyable afternoon in Truckee with Sue Lundblade, her husband Rick, and son Eric going through family albums of her grandfather Will McDonald’s photos. I loved hearing the stories that went along with the pictures and receiving a gift of my favorite postcard: her dad Ted and uncle Elmer dressed as Indians, beside their Sears Catalog teepee next to Coyote Creek. It’s my favorite picture because, upon close inspection, in addition to the two young boys, you see hanging over the campfire suspended on a rope is a tea pot! Here’s another version of the picture [on following page]:

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## Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs - Update, continued...



Ted and Elmer McDonald, playing beside Coyote Creek at Gilroy Hot Springs.  
Photo courtesy of the McDonald/Lundblade families

That same week, I got a call from Karen Byers, granddaughter of H.K. Sakata, who was cleaning out her mother Mary Sakata Matsushita's home and preparing it for sale. She called to ask if I remembered items from GYHS' kitchen and dining room. She sent pictures which I shared with my cousin, aunt, and sisters – yes, we remembered them. So Karen gave me a box of bowls, trays, cups, dishes for the future GYHS museum. As I list and photograph the items, I find one more very unexpected surprise with the boxes: a vinyl voice recording of Masuo Kitaji – my uncle, the Captain! I knew he had made voice recordings in the 1950s. My aunt delighted in telling me they had a recording of me crying when I was a baby, but I hadn't seen or heard any. Imagine how I feel hearing his voice again after 40 years! Yes, it will be digitized. No, I don't think it is in English (the label is hand-written in Japanese, which I can't read) and no, I won't understand what he's saying unless it's in English. Yes, the vinyl record will be part of the GYHS museum collection. I'm so excited!

Speaking of Captain Kitaji, I received word from Kaoru 'Kay' Ueda of the Japanese Diaspora Initiative at the Hoover Institute, Stanford, that a religion professor from a Southern California university specializing in Japanese Christians is putting together a research team to study the Kitaji Bibles. The team members all read and understand Japanese, and they want to know if the Captain's theology changed over time. Kay has received other inquiries from another religion professor specializing in Santa Clara County Christians and a yet another professor of art history. We are excited that they share enthusiasm for the Captain's life's work, and we look forward to learning more about its contents from their studies of it.

# The Most Difficult Trail in Henry W. Coe State Park

By Peregrine Greatwing

Coe Park has some difficult trails. No, it's true. I didn't believe it myself either, and I've been hiking here since Billy Beer was a thing. In fact, Coe has some of the most challenging trails in the Bay Area for hiking, strutting, swaggering, or somnambulating. There is a contentious debate as to which is the most difficult. Some would argue it is the so-called "Short Cut," the 1.5-mile near-vertical ascent up Hobbs Road to the top of Blue Ridge. A five-member expedition recently set out to climb it but turned back after exhausting their oxygen supply.

Said the expedition leader, "It was touch-and-go there for a while. I lost my sense of touch, so it was time to go."

However, there is one trail for which the cries of anguish from those forced to walk upon it will echo in my ears until my last moment on earth. It is not arduous, nor dangerous, nor deprived of shade, yet nothing strikes fear into the hearts of mortal visitors like the .4-mile Live Oak Trail connecting the Entrance Parking Lot to the Coe Ranch Visitor Center.

Anyone who has worked at the Coe Ranch Entrance has heard a googol of excuses from people begging to avoid the Live Oak Trail:

"I cannot jog more than 14.6783221 miles. This extra .4 of a mile puts me dangerously over my limit!"

"I didn't come here to hike. I'm backpacking to Mississippi Lake!"

"My dog is allergic to dog trails."

After nearly two decades of enduring protestations with what my cardiologist describes as "sympathy pains," I decided to experience this reviled trail from the perspective of a visitor. So one morning on my way to work, I shut down all but my essential cognitive functions and imagined myself as a Coe neophyte. A sharp wave of panic suffocated me as I became aware of the treacherous nature of E. Dunne Ave. I gripped the steering wheel and continued up the middle of the road at a newt's pace. Four hours later, I arrived at the Coe Ranch Entrance. I drove through an open gate into an empty dirt lot and parked precariously about twenty feet from the sheer cliff's edge. As I opened my driver's side door, a seventy mile-per-hour gale ripped the handle from my fingers. Recalling my Cub Scout Bobcat badge training, I locked a plastic souvenir carabineer to the frame of my seat and tied dental floss to it and my belt using a simple overhand knot. As I stepped out of my car, another gravel-laden gust of wind tackled me to the ground. The carabineer snapped and flew into a tree. Fortunately, the dental floss wound around a branch—thus saving me from barreling over the precipice. With the can of soda and half of a granola bar I had brought for survival purposes now out of reach, there was no choice but to venture forth on the dreaded Live Oak Trail.

I crawled on my stomach for several feet until all the floss had spooled out and drifted into the trees like tinsel. Looking up, I saw a lonely sign perched atop a fence post.

**VISITOR CENTER ½ MILE →**

I slithered for a short while down the narrow path until my elbows ached, then stood up and brushed myself off. The winds that had threatened to turn me into a Christmas tree ornament had finally subsided. The trail sloped gently downward and toward a white oak that appeared ancient and weary from holding up thick branches. One shed limb wreathed in green grass lay lifeless beneath it. As the hopeful morning sun surrendered to the shade of evergreens, I felt caution rising up into my throat like half of a partially digested granola bar. Certainly, the ease of this pleasant trail is all a ruse. I thought there must be some obstacle ahead in my path like a rockslide or a tick the size of a dinner plate or an ornery tree squirrel. As I rounded a corner, a hillside of violet-blue California Gilia soothed my trepidation. Beyond it, a shaggy carpet of moss coated exposed bedrock as the path made a sharp turn at the first gully crossing. Cool air slipped down through the steep canyon, and with it, my worried thoughts. I'd forgotten all about the terrifying drive up the hill, the hurricane-force winds, and my estranged breakfast.

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## The Most Difficult Trail in Henry W. Coe State Park, continued...

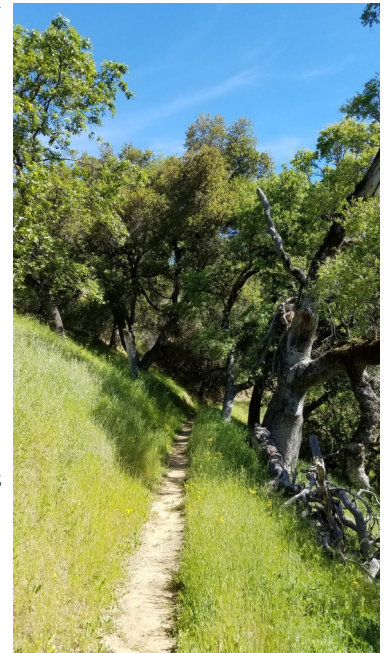
A Northern Flicker cackled high above, and I was quickly enshrouded in the polyphony of nature. My mind began to wander, but my legs and feet still knew what to do.

Naturally, I tripped and fell face first into a tract of Chinese Houses. Though my nostrils were filled with dirt, there was a subtle perfume I still am unable to put into words—sort of a mix of fresh rain and toasted cotton candy. After doing a panicky tick check, I swabbed my forehead to brush away a bead of sweat. A ladybug crawled down my index finger, unfurled wings hidden beneath its shell and flew away. I traveled on through a forest of Blue Oaks, whose branches cast a spider web of shadows on the path. I imagined hundreds of bobcats and cougars over many decades sharpening their claws and carving the long striations in the ashen bark. Cordoza Ridge then came into view, and a lone cow stuck out like a black mole on the rolling grassy crest. Below that, the pale green leaves of freshly foliated deciduous trees in Soda Springs Canyon contrasted with their darker evergreen counterparts.

As the trail traversed once more into the welcoming shade of fragrant California bay laurel, I remembered how to tell the difference between coast and interior live oak. The cup-shaped leaves of coast live oaks resemble little boats. Hence, boats by the coast. On a side note, a good way to remember the difference between Woodland and Lowland Shooting Stars is Woodlands have red stems. Thus, red-wood. Redwood!

“Yay, Mnemonics!” I shouted smugly and nearly tripped over my hubris.

After passing another gully, I looked across the narrow canyon and marveled at a layer cake of wooden supports the size of railroad ties separated by rocks with shiny quartz crystals below the trail. A rather persnickety individual went to an awful lot of trouble to ensure the path would survive time and gravity’s propensity to pull things back down to the ocean. An exposed patch of chaparral and crispy gray pines abruptly interrupted the cool evergreens. A western fence lizard scurried for safety under some coyote brush. Suddenly, the trail became muddy. I gingerly stepped past lush and golden Seep-Spring Monkeyflower and blackberry vines reaching out to make friends with passersby. A tall Ponderosa stood sentry near an old red cabin. Civilization! My pace quickened and I was greeted to an equally red (and somewhat familiar) big building. I reached for the door handle and gave it a jiggle. Locked. A sign hanging in the window provided some enlightenment.



### CLOSED

To the left of the door was a friendly self-registration sign. I eagerly opened my wallet ready to pay any fee required of me to continue exploring this magnificent jewel of a park. It was then I came to my senses. I snorted out a laugh. How silly of me to think I was going to pay the fees. I’m a seasonal employee; I don’t have any money! So I shrugged, let out a long sigh and made my way back down the trail to my car.

The walk out was just as lovely as the walk in. Incidentally, it always amuses me how folks prefer to hike along loops. Any one trail can be a loop, provided you never look behind you. I stood in the windswept Entrance Parking Lot (which is easily in the top five of most beautiful parking lots in the county) enjoying the immense view that spans from distant Pinyon Peak in the Santa Lucia Range to smog-kissed Silicon Valley. I felt bewildered why so many rail against the walk to the Visitor Center. There is only about twenty feet of climbing, thus it’s not at all steep. In addition, there is barely any poison oak and maybe only one or two rabid pocket gophers at the most. The only hazard to trip over is one’s own obstinacy, though daydreaming is potentially perilous as well. The Live Oak Trail is like the blue bayou on Pirates of the Caribbean and lingonberry pie at Ikea; it prepares oneself physically and spiritually for the journey into nature, and upon leaving, makes one long to return. So if you ever feel the need to hold up traffic to protest a slight detour out the “terrifying” Live Oak Trail, just remember: life is short. And the suffering endured by having to walk along a lovely little trail may be temporary, but parks are forever.

**Pine Ridge Association  
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