



Canyon News

Black Mountain Park · Del Mar Mesa Preserve
Penasquitos Canyon Preserve
Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

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Restoration Projects:

Helping Hand for the Cactus Wren

Mike Kelly, Conservation Chair



Cactus Wren — Photo courtesy of James Gallagher, *Sea and Sage Audubon*.

The Friends need volunteers to help with a project to create habitat for a highly endangered bird species. We will be partnering with the Open Space Division of the City of San Diego's Parks & Recreation Dept. in a challenging project to implement a habitat restoration grant. The grant is about \$76,000 and will be used to begin a 10-year project, the creation of Cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) habitat out of the highly disturbed, non-native weedy grasslands of the new Santa Luz addition to Black Mountain Open Space Park. The grant was written by the Friends and submitted by the City to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, an agency of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.

The grant was funded as part of a competitive grant program to restore old agricultural lands, which Santa Luz is well qualified for, after more than a century of grazing and crops that didn't end until 5-6 years ago! Additional grants will be sought to expand the initial acreage. The Coastal Cactus wren is listed as a California State Species of Special Concern and Cleveland National Forest Sensitive.

The role of cacti

Our Coastal Cactus wren is a songbird that favors coastal sage scrub as its preferred habitat, specifically a sage scrub with a large proportion of cacti, especially

See **Wren** p. 6 for more

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Eagle Scouts in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Senior Park Ranger

Gina Washington

Eagle Scouts have been busy in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve during the month of November. Three Scouts completed three different projects at different locations around the Preserve. Eric Smith reconstructed a trail from Park Village Road into the canyon floor. The trail was severely eroded because there was not sufficient drainage. Eric received a large donation of fill sand-30, a type of trail material, from Vulcan to cap the trail. Eric supervised upwards of 20 volunteers during two days to create drainage and out-slope the trail. A couple of neighbors offered Eric their hoses and water to get good compaction on the new trail surface. The new trail work held up well during the first real rain of the season.

Garrett Murawsky built a pergola, shade structure, for the picnic area in the west end parking lot on Sorrento Valley Blvd. Garrett's project was two phased;

See **Scouts** p. 10 for more

Garrett's Project

(Scouts cont'd from pg 1)

the first day was spent putting in the supports. The second day was spent installing the actual structure. The pergola is phase one of the picnic area improvement. The second phase involves laying a compacted decomposed granite trail to and flooring under the pergola.

Andre Crabb installed many hundred feet of peeler log fencing to close illegal trails that have been created off of Sorrento Valley Blvd. The trails go through grasslands which are nesting habitat for the Northern Harrier. Andre's project consisted of installing the peeler log fence on the perimeter of the preserve and split rail fence closing the interior portion of the trail. He then used a Rotor-Tiller to loosen the soil of the trail so it will become re-vegetated over the next year.

All of these young men did a tremendous job of coordinating their projects and completing them on time. They are all a real asset to the resources that make Los Peñasquitos Canyon such a great place to visit.

Join the Los Peñasquitos Volunteer Patrol

Erik Basil, Treasurer, LPCP-CAC Member,
LPCP Volunteer Patrol

The Los Peñasquitos Volunteer Patrol is an ongoing cooperation between members of the Preserve community and Rangers Gina Washington and John Garwood. Members ride and walk the Preserve to assess current conditions, interact with visitors in the manner of a "trail docent" and to provide assistance, first aid and emergency response in coordination with the Ranger(s) and local agencies. If you're already visiting our Preserve, it's a fun way to ensure others' experience is as good and safe as it can be and, if you're not regularly visiting Los Peñasquitos, the Patrol is a great "excuse" to visit!

The Volunteer Patrol is looking for more participation in 2009, and we're looking for equestrian, hiking and cycling volunteers. Participation requires each volunteer to have/maintain both CPR and First Aid training, to complete a course in procedures and radio protocol, and to demonstrate a commitment to cheerful interaction as an "ambassador of the pre-

serve". One must also be over 18 years of age.

Anyone reading this that is interested in becoming a member of the LPCP Volunteer Patrol should contact Ranger Washington to indicate your interest. (gwashington@sandiego.gov) If we get enough response and interest before the New Year, there's a great possibility that the City will put on a group training day for the First Aid/CPR certifications many will need to earn/renew (and you might find a motion at the CAC asking to fund it for a few bucks). What a great way to get First Aid/CPR training "for free"!

You don't have to be a member of the CAC (or any other committee) to participate, but CAC members who complete the courses and participate in at least one "patrol ride/hike" will win a Cup of Coffee, donated by me (and brewed at a time coincident with its award, fear not)! Heck, I will extend this generous offer to any new member of the Patrol. Contact Ranger Washington now!



People to Know: Don Albright

Vice President,
Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc

Don is a retired geography-history teacher from the San Diego City Schools. His retirement job is doing geology activities for the San Diego Natural History Museum classes, field trips, and Baja expeditions. He's also a former Engineering Geologist for the Bridge Dept., California Division of Highways (now Caltrans). He's a long-time Baja explorer with a passion for exploring its mountains, canyons, deserts, and natural history. Another of Don's careers was

as a park naturalist for the California State Parks system.

He divides his leisure time between Southern California, Baja, Arizona, New Zealand, and Australia. He is a founding member of the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and leads regular geology walks in the Preserve. Don currently lives in Lakeside.