



Foundation Flyer—Spring 2008

"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."
Native American Proverb
www.srpf.org

Santa Rosa Plateau Foundation

Spring 2008

Dates to Remember:

- April 26—Garden Tour
- May 15—Annual Meeting
- July 12—Opening Night of The Art Show
- July 25—Cowboy Campfire
- July 26—Cowboy Jubilee
- September 29—Closing of The Art Show
- October—Docent Training
- Coming Soon - Children's Wildlife Day

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SANTA ROSA PLATEAU GARDEN TOUR

By Marion Hansen

Arriving soon, during the height of spring, will be the fifth annual SRPF Garden Tour on Saturday, April 26th, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., rain or shine. This is a unique self-guided tour featuring seven 5-acre estate properties in the La Cresta area bordering the Ecological Reserve. The resident gardeners provide an eclectic mix of rose, cottage, native, succulent, and cacti gardens with many interesting water and patio features. Youth musicians from the "Musicians' Workshop" will be featured at most of the gardens performing on a variety of instruments.

At one beautiful location the local fire station #75 will be providing a delicious lunch of barbecued sandwiches, salad bar, and cold drinks at a reasonable cost. Tables and chairs will provide a comfortable setting. Also, at the lunch location attendees will be able to shop at the "Garden Market" featuring



Kohler Pond featuring iron garden decor, plants and other garden related items.

This event is a fundraiser to benefit the third-grade educational program at the Santa Rose Plateau Ecological Reserve. The advance ticket price is \$15.00. On the day of the event tickets will be \$20.00 and can be purchased at the kiosk at the entrance of La Cresta. Tickets can be purchased early on-line at events at www.srpf.org or call (951) 813-8391 or the Foundation Office at (951) 461-7667 for information.

Come and bring your friends to enjoy spectacular gardens, get new ideas for your own plantings, take photos as much as you wish, and support a very important cause!

2008 Cowboy Jubilee Taking Shape

By Ginger Greaves

Last year, the Jubilee was billed by a reporter from the Californian "as a new chapter in the cowboy way of life for the area". The spotlight continues to musically and poetically celebrate the rich ranching and cowboy-way-of-life in Murrieta and environs with the return of the Sons of the San Joaquin and Waddie Mitchell on July 25 and July 26. The fundraiser will benefit the children's third grade education program at the Reserve.

Liberty Oaks Ranch in Tenaja

will host the Saturday night Jubilee with Cowboy dinner, silent auction, artesian displays and performances by the Sons and Waddie Mitchell. In addition, youth "aspiring country singers" from the local Musician's Workshop will perform.

The Jubilee will also include a Friday night "Cowboy Campfire" at Cottonwood Ranch in La Cresta. This unique aspect of the Jubilee will enable aspiring cowboy poets and singers to perform.

You can bring your strings and stories and perform for the Sons, Waddie, and eat, meet, and greet

the Jubilee headliners at the same time. Cowboy supper and live auction to be part of Friday night. Go to www.srpf.org (Our Events) for ticket information.



DONATIONS NEEDED!

Myra Gonzales has compiled nearly 3000 pages of documents describing the Santa Rosa Plateau (SRP) and local history. It's a wonderful resource for the Visitor Center, but faces the risk of loss or damage.

SRP docents are working to scan these documents onto a computer. We need a scanner with a document feeder and OCR capability, which will cost about \$250. We are seeking donations of any amount.

For more info, contact Steve Lusky, sllusky@gmail.com, 951-719-6271.

Outreach By Nancy Backstrand

It all began with a couple of docents bemoaning the fact that some third graders really needed to have an introduction to the plateau before they embarked on their field trip. And thus the outreach program was born, and grew as more docents joined in the conversation. After many months of brainstorming and planning we set about spending that \$1500 Foundation grant. After a few more weeks of gathering

and assembling, it was time to give the program a trial run. We looked over the school schedule and sent letters of invitation to those we felt might best benefit by our program. Our invitations were quickly accepted and we soon found ourselves almost over scheduled.

On Wednesday March 12, ready or not, five dedicated docents rose before sun-up grabbed a quick breakfast and climbed into an already

packed van full of cool stuff: display boards, pictures, rocks, seeds, insects, animal skulls and a fang from a saber toothed cat.

It was an ambitious day: two programs in the morning at Hemet's Little and a third in the afternoon just down the road at Valle Vista.

With Jackie Brown at the wheel and Joanne New riding as navigator we made it easily to our destination on-

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Revealing the Unseen By Park Interpreter Rob Hicks

When we venture into the outdoors, most of its inhabitants are hidden from our eager eyes. Bobcats can quickly disappear behind dense vegetation, while turtles swiftly submerge into deep tenajas. For visitors to the Reserve, much of the natural world is hidden.

One of our responsibilities as leaders of education programs involves promoting experiences with animals and plants that may otherwise go unnoticed. A simple technique called the clock method is one way to get children thinking about different ways to act in a different place to see wild animals.

When sighting an animal, instead of pointing it out to students with a raised and gesturing hand, call quietly its position on an imaginary clock that surrounds you. If twelve o'clock is down the trail ahead of you and 6 o'clock is behind you on the trail, then three o'clock is off the trail to the right. Eleven o'clock would be slightly off the trail and ahead to the left. Adhering to certain wildlife viewing behavior increases ones chances of observing animals living in a wild setting.

Unfortunately, even the quietest and most conscientious groups depart the

Plateau without witnessing wildlife. Therefore, it is our challenge to inspire them with what they do see during their visit and by stories of what they can return to see with friends and family.

During the early weeks of spring along the Plateau's Cole and Adobe Creeks, a unique creature returns to the watery place of its birth to mate. The California newt (*Taricha torosa*) is a creature that children are not likely to see during their field trip. It is an animal that looks like a lizard but is an amphibian which spends the beginning of its life strictly in water. Although it may go unseen, it is an animal whose story creates excitement and interest. And it is stories that children yearn for.

There was once a scientist (it was actually 1997 if you want to be less dramatic) who was studying a small fire from a safe distance. While taking notes about the fire's activity, he noticed something moving on the ground not far from the fire.

Walking across the ground, and in the path of the four inch flames, were two California newts. As the fire drew close, he observed a slimy substance ooze out of the newts' bodies. As the fire reached the newts, the slimy substance turned into a foamy coating covering their bodies. As the fire continued through the woodland habitat leaving behind burnt and blackened leaves of oaks and grasses, the two newts, now with a white crust over their bodies continued their walk.

Inspecting the newts, the scientist found no evidence of blisters or any other injury. The newts had safely walked through fire! It used to be thought that California Indians called them "fire lizards" for their brightly colored bellies that looked like the orange of fire. Not anymore!

The natural world is full of stories that impress and fascinate. While children may leave disappointed that they didn't see a wild animal, it can be the animal's history and stories that bring them back to look another day.

Outreach Continued from Page 2

time. We quickly unloaded our numerous boxes and displays on onto tables in the all purpose room. Fifteen minutes later we were ready to go as forty third graders took their seats for a quick introduction. Then they were divided into small groups and were led around our impromptu museum. Sixty kids joined in the formal presentation while another twenty, who had visited the plateau previously managed an unscheduled walk through. After a quick lunch in a nearby park we moved on to Valle Vista, where we tweaked the displays a bit and took on

another fifty kids.

The kids and teachers were enthusiastic but evaluation of the program would have to wait until their visit to the plateau.

Friday morning, the bus arrived a bit late due to traffic, the kids poured out of the bus with anticipation and best of all, with no anxiety! They knew what to expect, and there were no questions about pythons, meerkats or bears. These kids knew why they were there and Rob and the docents all raved about how well the tours went.

The program will still have some growing pains, but the teachers rated us "Fabulous! And the kids came carrying a large envelope of Thank You letters and illustrations.

What can be more rewarding than that?

Participating School Districts	
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- Golden Eagle \$150.00
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Save a tree. Educate a child. Respect Nature.

AWASH IN WILDFLOWERS

By Virginia Hyde

The winter rains have produced a bumper crop of wildflowers on the Reserve. Every trail offers photo opportunities and the challenge of identifying various plant species. The unique chocolate lily is quite plentiful at the lower end of the Transpreserve Trail and at the far end of Waterline Road. Wild peony and Johnny-jump-ups are also visible as you walk along Waterline. (For maps and specific sites stop at the Visitor Center, Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

As the vernal pools recede,



Chocolate Lily—picture courtesy of Owen Hyde

goldfields are blooming and soon the lovely downingia will be in full glory. Currently, ground pinks and red maids provide a colorful display along the Vernal Pool Trail. These are just a few of the many flowers in bloom.

Please remember to stay on the trail when taking photos and don't pick the wildflowers so that we can enjoy



Wild Peony—picture courtesy of Owen Hyde

them many years into the future.

Thank you to Owen Hyde for the beautiful pictures of the Plateau.



Vernal Pools—picture courtesy of Owen Hyde



Red Maids—picture courtesy of Owen Hyde



Santa Rosa Plateau Foundation

PO Box 941
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