



Mission Trails Regional Park News

Volume 19 Number 1

Winter/Spring 2008

Historic Old Mission Dam Project

If you have been out to the Old Mission Dam Historic Site recently, you may have noticed a few changes. First of all, you can actually see the dam from the viewpoint area once again, thanks to the much-needed removal of overgrown vegetation that was blocking the view. Plants and young trees that were actually growing right up against the side of the dam, and even ON the dam itself, were also removed to protect the dam's structural integrity from possible root damage. And, almost 20 years of sedimentation buildup was removed from the upstream side of the dam during this long-awaited, major dredging project that took place in October and November of 2007.

The Old Mission Dam was built by Kumeyaay labor between 1813 and 1816 to provide year-round water to the Mission San Diego de

Alcala, located approximately 6 miles downstream. The bulk of the water needed was for the Mission's crops and fields, which were located about 3 miles downstream from the dam, where the Admiral Baker Golf Course is today. An aqueduct, or flume, lined with hand-made clay tiles, was constructed alongside the river to carry water from the dam to the head of these fields. Together, the Old Mission Dam and Flume were the first major irrigation system devised by Europeans in what is now the state of California and the first west of the Mississippi River.

After the California Missions were secularized in 1833, the Old Mission Dam and Flume system was no longer used or maintained. Pioneers took advantage of this and began taking the clay tiles from the flume to use for the roofs and floors of their homes.

Dam continued on p. 6

Featured Park Fauna

Mule Deer

While hiking in MTRP, it is always a delight to discover one or more pairs of dark brown eyes staring back. The large mule-like ears are also a good clue, that a southern mule deer, *Odocoileus hemionus fuliginatus*, is checking you out. Also note the large whitish rump patch that is divided by a short, black-tipped tail. This subspecies is found in extreme southern California through Baja California Norte.



The value of a large intact area of protected land is evident when you realize that a female deer uses 60-340 acres of land and a buck needs 240 – 900 acres. Deer populations can get out of control without predators as seen in the eastern

Mule deer, continued on p. 3

Volunteers for Bird Nest Box Project Needed

The year 2007 was a fairly good one for the Mission Trails Bird Nest Box Project. A total of 163 young birds were fledged from our nest boxes throughout the park. As usual, House Wrens comprised the majority of the group, with 117 fledglings. Next, were Ash-throated Flycatchers, at 30. Bewick's Wrens accounted for 8 of the total, with House Finches accounting for 4. We are also proud to report that one of our nest boxes produced a beautiful brood of 4 Western Bluebirds!

For this year, we are in need of new volunteers to monitor the boxes. Each volunteer, or group of



volunteers (i.e., a family, scout troop, etc.), will be assigned 6 different nest boxes. They will then be responsible for checking these boxes on a weekly basis, from the end of February through the end of July. Also needed, during the off-season, is a volunteer interested in assisting with the maintenance and installation of nest boxes.

For those interested in volunteering for this wonderful project, please be sure to mark your calendars to attend the orientation meeting at the Visitor Center, scheduled for Saturday, February 23rd, at 11:30 a.m. For more information, contact Ranger Heidi at (619) 668-3279, or hgutknecht@mtrp.org



A Message From Councilmember Jim Madaffer

I hope that you had a very Happy New Year and that 2008 holds great promise.

As we begin the first quarter, I want to take this time to let you know how fortunate we are to have such outstanding people supporting Mission Trails Regional Park. We could not operate this vast park without so many reliable, dedicated volunteers. Thank you. That brings to mind also the volunteer leadership who serve on the MTRP Citizens' Advisory Committee. They look into issues affecting the park and make recommendations to the policy making group that comprises the MTRP Task Force. Also, the volunteers who serve on the Foundation Board deserve recognition for their efforts to raise funds to operate and improve the park. This February marks a milestone for the Foundation as they celebrate their 20th anniversary. Of course, the outstanding staff are experts in what they do and it is reflected in how the park operates and serves the public. We are so fortunate to have this vast resource that affords educational and recreational opportunities. It is a visual reminder of how historical San Diego used to look, while being located central to the region. I hope you and your family enjoy Mission Trails Regional Park and, again, thank you for your support.

As I enter the last year of my term in office I look to my priority list. An important item near the top is the goal of expanding

Mission Trails Regional Park. Already the City has acquired some land in the East Elliott area near the Santee city limits; we need to continue acquiring acreage in order to preserve open space and expand the park. The first thing on the "to do" list is to continue purchasing land at fair market value.

As always, I welcome hearing your comments regarding Mission Trails Regional Park or any other issue. Call me at (619) 236-6677 or send an email to jmadaffer@sandiego.gov. I invite you to visit my Web site at JimMadaffer.com where you may sign up to receive my electronic newsletter. Thank you and best wishes.

Fun With Ranger Heidi



During a recent school program for a group of 1st grade students, my mouse finger puppet was explaining to the kids what an *herbivore* is, telling them, "...ya know, I'm kinda like a *vegetarian*." Upon hearing this, a little boy in the back row excitedly jumped to his feet, raised his hand in the air, and proudly exclaimed, "Oh! I know what a vegetarian is! It's a doctor who helps animals!"

Ranger Heidi



Recycle your glass, plastic and aluminum at Kumeyaay Lake Campground. Containers are located in the day-use parking lot.

Proceeds go to MTRP Foundation.

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Art Exhibits

The Visitor Center has ongoing exhibitions of local area artists' works which can be purchased, with a percentage of the proceeds going to the MTRP Foundation.

**January 26, 2008 through
February 22, 2008**

**Darlene Katz
Landscapes: Near and Far**

Darlene Katz was born and raised in Syracuse, New York. After receiving a Ph.D. in Immunology, Darlene moved to San Diego where she pursued a successful career in the biotechnical industry. Ms. Katz attended art classes at Sarah Lawrence College in New York and

Northwestern University in Illinois. She also studied painting locally with various artists. Darlene has been a full-time artist for the past ten years, and, although she works in several media, her major focus is oil painting especially Plein air and portraiture. Ms. Katz is active in several local art associations, and her paintings may be seen in the Offtrack Gallery in Encinitas, The Rancho Sante Fe Gallery and The Beachfire Grill in San Juan Capistrano. You may also see samples of her art work on her website at:

www.studiokatz.com.

**February 23 - March 21, 2008
Foothills Art Association
Christine Waters, Carolyn Teinculf
Betty Johnsen, Jan Sticht
Teresa Shaffer, Carol McClure
And Jennifer Meeder**

**March 22 - April 18, 2008
Scott Streit
Solo Photography Exhibition**

**April 19 - May 9, 2008
Pat Dispenziere
Solo Art Exhibition**

**May 10 - June 28, 2008
Sixteenth Annual Amateur
Photography Contest**

All exhibits are on view in the Visitor and Interpretive Center Gallery daily from 9:00 – 5:00 p.m. The Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor and Interpretive Center is located at: One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, 92119.

Mule deer, *continued from p. 1*

U.S., where the white-tailed deer is over-running some urban areas. Out west, the mountain lion is the main predator and can take up to 50 deer per year.

Mule deer have many ways of evading attacks, real or perceived. They can run up to 40 miles an hour and are very good swimmers. The most spectacular mode of locomotion has to be "stotting" or "pronking". With this gait, the deer bounds and lands on all four feet at once. This method allows the deer to leap quickly (20-30 mph) and safely over obstacles in the brushy hillsides where it lives.

If you see several deer together, the chances are they are related. The doe could have her twin fawns and possibly yearlings with her as well. The females may stay with the mother up to two years, but the males usually go out on their own after one year. In May or June, the older does usually have twins, while yearlings produce only one fawn. The fawns are concealed for about one month and can run by three weeks old. They are weaned at four months and join their mothers in eating a variety of grasses, forbs, leaves of shrubs and small trees and even acorns.

Although, we think of deer as being silent, they actually make a few sounds. Females bark all year, grunt

to their young and bellow during rutting season. The bucks send out repeated low, short strained bleats during the rut and make a grunting bellow or bark on the approach of an aggressor.

When you are out hiking in the park, especially at dawn or dusk, keep an eye and ear out for these beautiful animals and you may be rewarded.

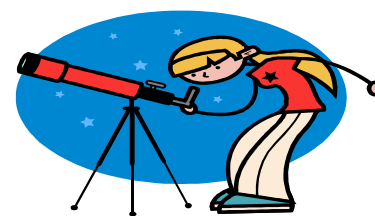
Trail Guide Ann Sixtus

Photo by Trail Guide Wendy Esterly

References:

Eder, Tamara. *Mammals of California*. Lone Pine Publishing International. 2005. pp. 46-49. (In MTRP bookstore) Wildlife Information Network

First published in the MTRP Trail Guide Newsletter "Trail Talk"



Star Parties

**February 16, 2008,
5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.**

**March 15, 2008,
6:00 pm to 9:00 pm.**

**April 12, 2008,
7:00 pm to 10:00 pm.**

Meet in the day use parking lot at the campground. Star parties canceled when skies are overcast.

Gift Shop

Our Gift Shop offers merchandise geared to those who love to explore the out-of-doors. Whether a guide book or a walking stick, our merchandise will help you enjoy your excursions into nature.

Besides our own "San Diego's Mission Trails Regional Park: Official Guide Book", you will find various books dealing with the geology, history and ecology of the San Diego region.

The gift shop also continues to carry crafts made by the local Native American people. Numerous pots and baskets are available for your purchase and enjoyment.

Thank you to our many Mission Trails contributors of 2007

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DAM DREDGING PROJECT COMPLETED



Before - The dam is nearly completely covered by vegetation



After - The reservoir is attracting water birds and fish.

Dam, *continued from p. 1*

Because of this, there are few remaining tiles, or even the flume itself, as most of it has been eroded over the years, washed away by floods, or grown over with plants. A replica of the flume can be seen on the back terrace of the Visitor Center; a couple original clay tiles from the flume are also on display inside.

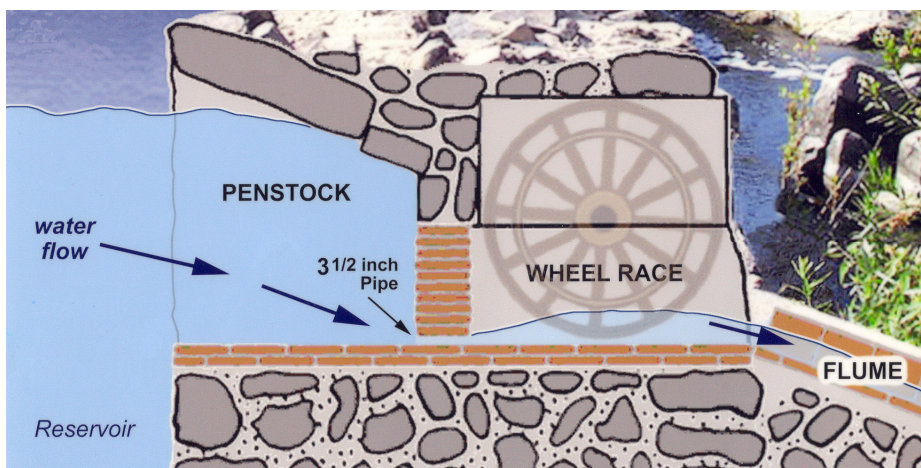
Many people do not realize that the open spillway on the south end of the dam is not a breach from damage, but is actually an intentional opening that once housed a wooden floodgate to regulate the level of the reservoir. Another interesting feature is the penstock located at the north end of the dam. This 3-½ inch diameter conduit car-

ried water to a wooden wheel race, which in turn powered a large stone gristmill and served as the water outlet for the flume. The water wheel and gristmill are long gone, of course, but, thanks to this recent project, visitors can now straddle over the rectangular wheel race opening and glance down to see water once again rushing out of the 3-½ inch hole, just as it did historically!

The Old Mission Dam may not seem very impressive by today's standards, but when you remember that it was built almost two centuries ago (before there were tractors, bulldozers and Home Depot stores), it makes you appreciate the fact that each stone was placed there by hand. Also, although the dam may be rather small, compared to the massive dams of today, it

had a HUGE impact on early California's history. After all, without the Old Mission Dam and Flume system, Alta California's very first mission, right here in San Diego, would not have been able to survive. And if the Padres (Catholic Priests from Spain, not our baseball team!) could not make it work at the first mission, do you think they would have bothered to establish 20 more missions along the coast?

Ranger Heidi Gutknecht



Crosssection at Waterwheel



Water exiting the pipe into the wheel race where the waterwheel would have been situated

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to support Mission Trails**



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Ways you can donate to Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation

The Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation Board of Directors extends sincere thanks to our many donors. It is owing to your continuing support that we are able to fulfill our Mission - *In partnership with the City of San Diego, to preserve and protect the natural environment of Mission Trails Regional Park and to provide and promote educational and recreational opportunities.*

In addition to traditional cash donations, there are other ways you can provide short and long-term financial support for park programs and projects.

Memorial or In Honor Of gifts

Honor a friend or family member with a donation.

Matching Funds

Identify Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation for a matching funds contribution if your employer

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In order to allow donors to realize full tax deductions for appreciated stock, Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation accepts gifts of stock. Please call (619) 668-3280 for further details.

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The Foundation's Special Funds include education and library funds, trail and tree/habitat maintenance funds, education and library endowment funds. Call (619) 668-3280 for further information. - MTRP Foundation Federal Tax ID number 33-0285093.

Mission Trails Regional Park Donor Opportunities

Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation provides opportunities for individuals, businesses, community organizations and foundations to support a variety of programs and projects within Mission Trails Regional Park. Thank you to our many friends who make annual contributions to Friends of Mission Trails Regional Park. A variety of donor opportunities are available as indicated below. All contributions are tax deductible. Names of contributors of \$1,000 or more will be engraved on a plaque permanently displayed at the park Visitor and Interpretive Center. Donations of \$100 and above will accumulate from year-to-year for contributor recognition purposes.

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Make check payable to MTRP Foundation and send to:
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Volume 19 Number 1 Winter/Spring
Mission Trails Regional Park News

Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Inc., established in January 1988, is a non-profit public benefit corporation organized for the purpose of preserving, improving and maintaining Mission Trails Regional Park.

Mission Trails Regional Park News is a publication of Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Inc., published four times a year.

*Editor: Roland Roberge
Distribution: Marjorie Ferrante*

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Mark Your Calendar

Sixteenth Annual Amateur Photography Contest



The 2008 Amateur Photo Contest will coincide with this year's Explore Mission Trails Day, May 17, 2008. All entries will be on display during this yearly event, which celebrates everything Mission Trails has to offer.

The deadline for submitting photos is 5:00 pm, Friday, April 18, 2008. The entries will be on display in the gallery during the months of May and June. You are welcome to attend the Photo Contest Reception and Awards Ceremony on June 22, 2008 at 2:00 p. m. The contest is being sponsored by the Barona Band of Mission Indians.

Sixth Annual Explore Mission Trails Day

Join park staff and volunteers on Saturday, May 17, 2008 for an all day celebration highlighting everything Mission Trails has to offer. This popular event will feature free interpretive walks, talks and programs throughout the park, including live animals and activities for children. An exhibition of this year's Annual Photo Contest will be on display at the Visitor and Interpretive Center. There will be free pony rides and children's crafts at the Equestrian Staging Area.

Explore Mission Trails Day is presented by Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department, City of Santee Community Services Department, San Diego City Councilmember Jim Madaffer, and Santee City Councilmember Brian Jones.

Funding is being provided by the following sponsors: **Title Sponsors** - Supervisor Pam Slater-Price and the County of San Diego, Pardee Homes, San Diego Landfill Systems. **Community Sponsors** - Superior

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