



Mission Trails Regional Park News

Volume 20, Number 1

Winter/Spring, 2009

Welcome the Foundation's First Executive Director

Jay Wilson is a native San Diegan, a 1966 graduate of the University of San Diego with a degree in political science, and he has been a resident of the Navajo community since 1968. He has a strong background in marketing and a keen interest in conservation and ecology from spending a total of 15 years as the Assistant Director of Marketing for Sea World and Director of Marketing for the San Diego Zoo and the Wild Animal Park. Most recently Jay served for nearly 14 years as a City Council Representative for Councilmembers Judy McCarty and Jim Madaffer respectively. Jay has been an active member of the community from the early 1970's and has been a member of the Lake Murray Kiwanis Club since 1995. He enjoys computers and technology, reading, and his grandchildren. Jay and his wife Carole reside in Del Cerro.



**Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation
Executive Director
Jay Wilson**

Featured Fauna Lizards

My first contact with lizards was seeing them portray dinosaurs in old movies. To make them look more interesting, they were often outfitted with prosthetics, such as horns, gills, spines, etc. Later, I would see these fascinating reptiles in nature programs doing little jigs on the hot sand in order to keep their feet cool. It wasn't until I moved to San Diego that I met the little critters in their natural environment; devoid of any entertainment value, I still find them fascinating.

Lizards are reptiles whose ancestors began populating the planet over 200 million years ago. There are nearly 5,000 species of lizard living all over the Earth, with the exception of severely cold regions. There is great



Leaves of three . . . ? Let it be!

by Ranger Heidi Gutknecht

Here on the west coast we have poison **oak** (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), not ivy. However, both plants look very similar, with leaves containing *leaflets* of three – the two bottom leaflets appear to be “kissing,” while the top leaflet is “running away.” Poison oak prefers to grow in shady areas and in *riparian* habitats (along a river or stream). It often sends out vines, which attach to and climb up other plants and trees, making it sometimes difficult to notice. Poison oak can also be challenging to recognize, as its appearance changes throughout the year. During the summer its leaves turn yellow and

brown, and then to a beautiful crimson red in the fall. Being a *deciduous* plant, its leaves are then dropped and the plant remains “naked” throughout the winter. Come spring, shiny new green leaves return.

So, why do we need to “let it be?” All parts of poison oak (including the stems!) contain *urushiol* oil, which can cause an allergic dermatitis reaction when contact is made. A rash of itchy blisters can result, which can be spread if broken open by scratching. This *urushiol* oil is active in both live and dead plants and can remain intact

variation among the species, but generally lizards are cold blooded, have external ears, four legs with clawed feet, a long body and a weak tail that will break off easily when grabbed by a predator. The tail helps with balance and also stores fat and can be a problem once lost. Fortunately, many lizard species' tails grow back. Most lizards also have cold, dry, scaly skin, which can come with intricate patterns and vivid colors. This skin will molt as the lizard grows.

Poison Oak, continued on P. 2

Lizard, continued on p. 3

Nature Explorers

Mission Trails Regional Park offers a NEW program for ages 5-10 and parents (younger siblings who can manage are also welcome). We will begin with a 10-minute wildlife introduction, then hit the trails. The many changes taking place in the park at dusk will be explored, using our four senses and flashlights to aid us.

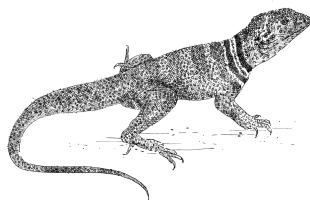
The Nature Explorer's program Takes place at the Kumeyaay Lake Campground. Pass through the Entry Station and park in the Day Use Parking Lot. Meet at the Shade Structure, across from the restrooms.

The Nature Explorers is from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on the following Fridays: Jan. 9th, Feb. 13th, Mar. 13th, Apr. 10th, May 15th, & Jun. 12th

For your comfort and safety, please remember to wear sturdy, closed-toed shoes; dress in layers and pack water bottles and snacks.

To register, please e-mail the information listed below to Linda Hawley, Volunteer Trail Guide and Nature-Teacher, at: hawleylinda@hotmail.com

1. Parent's name
2. Child(ren)'s Name(s) and age(s)
3. Phone Number
4. E-mail Address



Poison Oak, continued from p. 1

on objects it has come into contact with for years! For this reason items, such as boots, clothing and camping equipment, should be carefully washed with a strong detergent that can break up the urushiol oil; using just a regular soap will merely spread the oil around on the object.

Poison oak can also contaminate the fur of animals, which is yet another good reason for dogs to be kept on leash at all times while hiking here in the park. Even smoke

from the burning plant can cause severe eye and respiratory problems. Despite the negative effects it can have on humans, poison oak does have its redeeming qualities, too. For example, in addition to being an attractive plant to look at, poison oak provides both food and shelter for local wildlife. Some Native Americans even used it to help get rid of their warts! So, we need not dislike or fear poison oak, as long as we respect and are aware of it. The best way to avoid coming into contact with it, of course, is to simply **stay on the trails!**

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Lizard, continued from p.1

Like snakes, lizards smell by sticking out their tongues. The scent organ is actually located on the roof of their mouth; the tongue darts out collecting odor molecules, then it retracts depositing those molecules on their "nose". This helps them to find food, a mate, or spot predators. Unlike snakes, which have no moveable

Komodo dragon is really a whopping big lizard, which will even eat a person if given the chance.

Sometimes Lizards fool you by looking like something else. One looks like a toad, but is actually the horned lizard. Another looks like a snake, but is really a lizard without legs. How can you tell a legless lizard from a snake? See if it blinks!

The predominate lizard



eyelids, lizards have eyelids they can blink. One exception is the gecko, which has a clear membrane to protect their eyes from dirt and bright sunlight. Don't look for the standard mammalian ears on a lizard; they have visible ear openings flush with their bodies. Also, don't bother trying to listen for lizards; few species actually vocalize.

Different lizards eat different stuff, generally depending on the size of the lizard. Smaller species will eat bugs, spiders and even plants and their fruit, while larger species will eat small animals and birds. And, like most creatures in nature, lizards are a food source for birds, animals, snakes and even other lizards!

To give you an idea of just how different lizards can be, the

species in San Diego are: Great Basin fence lizard, San Diego alligator lizard, granite spiny lizard, San Diego banded gecko, side-blotched lizard, San Diego horned lizard, Henshaw night lizard, Colorado skink, orange-throated whiptail, and silvery legless lizard.

Unless it is cold and overcast, it is almost impossible not to see a lizard while hiking in the park. The fence and alligator lizards are those you are most likely to see while in the park. Being cold blooded, they love sunning themselves out in the open, on a warm rock and sometimes atop a fence post. Move very slowly and you can almost touch them before they scurry off to hide.

Roland Roberge

Nest Box Volunteers Needed

The MTRP Bird Nest Box Project needs volunteers to help out for this coming spring.

Each volunteer, or group of volunteers (i.e., a family, scout troop, etc.), will be assigned six different nest boxes, which they will be responsible for monitoring on a weekly basis from March through July. Those interested should contact Project Manager Daniece Moden at (619) 447-9766 or sdsymphonyusher@yahoo.com.

Mark Your Calendar For The Seventeenth Annual Photography Contest

Contest Deadline April 24, 2009

All entries will be on display at the Visitor Center from May 10 to June 13, 2009.

Reception and awards ceremony will be held Sunday, May 31, 2009

Art Exhibit Schedule

January 31- February 27, 2009

Dana Levine, Photography and Jan Thompson, Photography

Show title: Sunshine and Shadow

Reception: Saturday, Feb. 7th 1-3 pm

February 28-March 27, 2009

Jerome Lipetzky, Oil and
Jane Fletcher, Oil

March 28-April 24, 2009

Jim Respress, Photography

April 25 - May 8, 2009

(two week show)

Melva Riley, Oil, Mike Kemp, Oil and
Creela Villani, Oil

Cell Phone Patrol

Report any suspicious behavior in or around our parking lots and facilities.

**Rangers
(9:00 am - 5:00 pm)
call 619-668-3281
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Thank you to our many Mission Trails contributors of 2008

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 Mission Trails

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MTRP FOUNDATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Working in cooperation with the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008

The Foundation funded, and working with park staff, provided oversight for the following exhibits in the Visitor and Interpretive Center: the new “Animals in Mission Trails” exhibit; continued work on the “Predators of Mission Trails” exhibit, which includes a new wall mural (still in progress, approximately 80% of the mural was completed.); a faux mountain lion was created and installed; existing taxidermied coyote was moved to this exhibit.

The Foundation maintains computers at the Visitor Center for use by City staff, Foundation staff, volunteers, and visitors as well as a server, and a computer dedicated to the Visitor Center weather station. It provided funding for and, working with park staff, oversaw the repair and replacement of all exhibits as well as the theater shows and equipment. It continues to sponsor art shows in the gallery and an annual amateur photographic contest.

The Foundation co-sponsors with the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department programs for children and adults. It also continues to maintain a Gift Shop at the Visitor Center. Work also began on a new and updated Trail Map to be sold in the Gift Shop. Cox Communications continues to donate high speed Internet service at the Visitor Center.

Five new wayside information panels were installed along Father Junipero Serra Trail replacing old and faded panels. The Cowles Mountain summit boulder was refurbished and the bronze plaque replaced. Donor contributions for special projects such as the Trail Maintenance and the Tree and Habitat Maintenance Funds were used for the following projects: fencing material for use on the Cowles Mountain trail and in other areas of the park; plants for the Visitor Center plant identification walk; trees planted at Kumeyaay Lake Campground as part of the annual Arbor Day event.

A water line from the Visitor Center side of Father Junipero Serra Trail to the Oak Grove Trail trailhead was installed in order to provide water to the existing oak trees and for the 2008 Arbor Day tree plantings. Four picnic table pads and one donated picnic table were installed.

The Foundation contracted with Joseph Wong Design Associates (JWDA) to conduct a feasibility study for the Equestrian Staging Area comfort station.

The Foundation owns and continues to support and improve the Park web site MTRP.ORG. The City of San Diego Special Promotional Programs is given credit on the site. Art Street Interactive (ASI) continues to donate a significant amount of staff time to maintain and improve the MTRP web site.

The Foundation continues to promote the park by placing an advertisement for the park, including the campground, in the San Diego East Visitors Bureau map. It contracted with a public relations/marketing consultant to get publicity for the park and the annual Explore Mission Trails Day. Quarterly newsletters were published, sent to donors and interested individuals and organizations, and made available at the Visitor Center and other public facilities. An e-newsletter is sent to subscribers for more timely communication with Mission Trails supporters and users.

The Sixth Annual Explore Mission Trails Day was held on May 17, 2008. Activities were held at the Visitor Center, equestrian staging area and campground. Corporate sponsorships included one Media sponsor, four Title sponsors, four Community sponsors, one Pony Ride sponsor, one Ms. Frizzle sponsor, one Photo Contest sponsor, and four Neighborhood sponsors. Donations included \$36,500 in cash and \$19,000 in product and in-kind services.

The Foundation maintains the Kumeyaay Lake Campground internet and intranet web sites which were developed by the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department. This system is used for making campground reservations and accepting payments, some on-line and some at the campground entry station. The Foundation pays for all upgrades to the system as well as Cox Communications monthly Internet access fees. The Foundation contracted with Art Street Interactive (ASI) in 2007 to upgrade the on-line campground reservation system. It is anticipated that the new system will be completed during the FY2009 fiscal year.

Other accomplishments include purchase and maintenance of all computer equipment at the campground for use by staff and volunteers, as well as co-sponsoring, with the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department, programs for children and adults at the Campground and Visitor Center.

The Foundation provides on-going support for the volunteer program sponsored by the Park and Recreation Department. Support in FY2008 included: subsidizing the cost of polo shirts worn by park volunteers; providing badges for volunteers; paying for snacks for work crews, trail guide trainings and other volunteer events, as well as lunch and snacks for volunteer patrol training; funding the monthly Trail Guide newsletter; supporting the annual volunteer awards event by providing plaques, gift certificates and door prizes in addition to food, beverages and paper products for the potluck held in conjunction with the awards program.

This is only a partial, edited list of Foundation Accomplishments. For the complete document, call 619-688-3280 or e-mail mtrp@mtrp.org.

Support Mission Trails Regional Park



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to support Mission Trails



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access the "sign up" link near
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and follow the simple
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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 has a policy of matching charitable gifts.

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Remember Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation in your will.

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With a CRT, highly appreciated assets are placed in an irrevocable trust. Those asset proceeds provide income to the donor and/or to his/her beneficiaries for life. Contact your financial advisor for information.

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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Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
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Make check payable to MTRP Foundation and send to:
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Volume 20, Number 1 - Winter/Spring, 2009

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

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GO TO <http://www.mtrp.org/newsletter.asp>

Another Successful Arbor Day

This year's Mission Trails Regional Park Arbor Day was celebrated on Saturday, December 6th at the new Oak Grove trail picnic area. Fifteen cottonwood trees and California Wild Rose, Lemonadeberry, Bladderpod, Toyon and Monkeyflower shrubs were planted. Members of Boy Scout Troop 950 assisted with planting the trees and shrubs.

Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation thanks the donors for their support of our 2008 Arbor Day, many who came with family and friends to plant trees in honor or memory of a special person in their life. (See the list of donors on page 5)

Our 2008 Arbor Day in Mission Trails was sponsored by City of San Diego Councilmember Jim Madaffer, City of San Diego Park & Recreation Department, Mission Trails Regional Park Citizens' Advisory Committee and Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation.



Over thirty people attended Arbor Day 2008 to plant fifteen cottonwood trees and various shrubs at the new Oak Grove Trail picnic area.