

Mission Trails Regional Park News

Volume 22, Number 3 --A Publication of the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation-- Summer 2011

The Horned Lizard by George Varga, Trail Guide

At an event in the Visitor Center a Trail Guide, Audrey Baker, asked me if I had ever seen a horny toad in Mission Trails Regional Park. The question may have been prompted by the fact that I was wearing a pin depicting two horny toads (actually lizards and not toads) on top of each

other doing what ensures the continuation of the species. A short discussion about horny toads followed and the idea for this article was born.

Yes, there are horny toads in the park and I have seen them. Most often I have encountered them on patrols along the Rim Trail, the Kwaay Paay Peak Trail and a few times along trails in the Grasslands. The problem in sighting them is that horny toads are extremely well camouflaged. It is

only when they move that they are best sighted. One time I missed stepping on one by inches as I was heading up Kwaay Paay. On the North Rim of the Grand Canyon I have seen them with greater frequency than at Mission Trails.

Horny toads are not toads at all but in fact are lizards in the family *Phrynosomatidae*. They belong to the genus *Phrynosoma*. The name is derived

Lizard, continued on p. 6



Horned Lizard
by Nancy Varga, Trail Guide



A Message From Executive Director Jay Wilson

Mission Trails is ever changing: whether it is the current restoration of the Cowles Mountain Trail, our monthly concerts, the rotating art exhibitions in the Visitor Center Gallery, or a hike on any of our 42 miles of trails, the park has something to offer you every day.

In June we initiated our first digital research through the efforts of MTRP Foundation board member Michael Bruncker. Using Zoomerang, com he sent a single question “How likely are you to recommend Mission Trails to a colleague or friends?” to the nearly 2,500 friends on our e-mail list. We received an incredible 500 responses (20%). On a scale of 1-10, 85% of the responders gave us a 9 or 10. Ten percent gave us an 8, and 5% gave us a 5,6 or 7. The major theme of the responses is summed up with this one, “Mission Trails is a beautiful, wild park in an urban setting that’s easy to access, is well maintained, but feels like wilderness. It feels like you’re getting to the middle of nowhere, and it’s in your own backyard.”

San Diego Magazine announced that our Cowles Mountain Trail was voted the best hiking trail in San Diego County in their first “Best of Family Fun” awards.

The splendor of the park never ceases to amaze me and I have the pleasure of showing it off. One way is with my “adopted” picnic table out the back door of the Visitor Center. It provides a 280 degree vista of Mission Trails. When anyone calls and says “let’s go to lunch,” I always tell them to bring their salad or sandwich. It is a great place for a lunch meeting; no noisy restaurant, the serenity of Mission Trails, and the person(s) who joined me for lunch can’t believe there is a place like this so close.

In the past several months we have had very successful evening events encompassing the Visitor Center and the terrace. The biggest event was attended by nearly 350 people and was a joint fund-raising effort for three nonprofit organizations: East County Magazine, Chefs de Cuisine, and the MTRP Foundation. It was a great location for an event. Whether you want a unique location for a day-time business retreat for up to 65 people, or you need an evening venue for up to 350 people for a fundraiser or corporate event, we can accommodate you.

We want you to LIKE our page on facebook! Post our wall with your personal stories and pictures, a fun way for everyone to see and hear about your amazing times at the park. Please check our web page mtrp.org.

Upcoming Free Concerts

Sunday, August 21
Amy Kanner - Celtic harp music.

Sunday, September 18
Paul Seaforth & Mo’Sax Quartet.

Sunday, October 16
Silverwoods returns to our stage.

Concerts begin at 3:00 pm and are followed by a public reception in the Visitor Center Gallery.

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A Highly Successful 19th Annual Photography Contest

The winners of the 19th annual Amateur Photography Contest were announced at a reception held on Sunday, May 22nd in the Visitor and Interpretive Center. This year there were a record number 231 beautiful entries from 82 talented photographers.

The Leonard Butterman Best of Show award was presented by Arnie Freidman in memory of Leonard Butterman, an avid amateur photographer for seven decades. Best of Show was awarded to Verland Nolta for "Old Mission Dam Moon Light." The public was invited to vote for the Peoples Choice which was awarded to Janice Wright for "New Years Day Evening" taken at the Visitor and Interpretive Center.

Thank you to all of the participants and congratulations to the winners. Thank you to our Photography Contest Committee members: Betty Ogilvie, chair; Don Steele, Connie Wood and Roland Roberge.

BEST OF SHOW



VERLAND NOLTA - OLD MISSION DAM MOON LIGHT

The photography contest, reception and awards ceremony are an annual event sponsored by Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation in cooperation with the City of San Diego Park & Recreation Department

Other winners include -

Black and White:

William Fossett, 1st place; Gary Lange, 2nd place; Nicholas Gavin, 3rd place; William Fossett, Honorable Mention.

Youth Division:

David Satoda, 1st place; David Satoda, 2nd Place; Riley Anderson, 3rd place; Katharina Hass, Honorable Mention.

Color – People, Flora & Fauna:

Cheryl Old, 1st place; Verland Nolta, 2nd Place; Bill Howell, 3rd place; Bill Casper, Honorable Mention.

Color – Scenic Views:

Jean Eichenlaub, 1st place; Richard Guarascio, 2nd place; Edeltraud Hayhurst, 3rd place; Verland Nolta, Honorable Mention.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE



JANICE WRIGHT - NEW YEARS DAY EVENING

PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNER JANICE WRIGHT



FIRST PLACE - BLACK & WHITE



WILLIAM FOSSETT - ROCKY PEAK

The Not So Lost Art of Flint Knapping by Tom Hale, Trail Guide

As a volunteer Trail Guide at Mission Trails Regional Park, I believe that in addition to giving tours of the hiking trails, we should also celebrate and pass on the heritage passed down to us from the Kumeyaay, who were living here well before the Missionaries “discovered” San Diego. So, when I received an e-mail flier about a flint knapping course with Dr. Timothy Gross, an Archaeology Professor, I jumped at the chance to re-learn a skill I had forgotten in my youth.

The course was held at the San Diego Archaeology Center in Escondido. The class started with a brief reminder about safety and ethics of flint knapping. Safety is paramount because we were to be replicating actual deadly weapons similar to what the Native Americans would have used to kill and prepare game. The act of chipping away at what is essentially glass, creates razor-sharp shards that will fly into the eyes of an unprotected bystander. Those shards will slice your hands so cleanly, you’ll see the blood before you even know you’re cut!

You may be wondering how making arrow points out of stone

could possibly have anything to do with ethics. Well, first, the flint knapping technique, materials used, and the final product are so very similar to what would have been used in the past, Archaeologists are not able to tell the difference between an arrow point you made last week and an actual artifact. Some less reputable people have sold their reproductions as actual artifacts. Secondly, the process of flint knapping produces chips and fragments of the waste material which ends up in a pile at your feet, exactly like the waste piles found at archaeological digs where

Knapping, continued on p.6

FIRST PLACE - COLOR (SCENIC VIEW)



JEAN EICHENLAUB - FOGGY MORN

Children’s Nature Adventures!

September through June, Linda Hawley’s “Nature Adventures!” delights children of all ages with the animated enthusiasm she brings to her entertaining two hour programs at MTRP’s Visitor Center. Factual information is introduced about San Diego’s wild animals each month, using songs, puppets, real pelts, replicated skulls, scats, tracks and taxidermy specimens. The lesson is followed by an easy trail walk and a return to the classroom, where children make a related, take-home craft. Lessons about the Kumeyaay people and the flora of MTRP are included. Participants attend only one morning per month, and children must be accompanied by an adult. Adults always attend FREE! With advance registration and pre-payment for all 10 classes the cost is \$7 per class per child, ages 3 and up; for pre-payment of 3-9 classes, the cost is \$8 per child. The cost for 1 or 2 classes or on the day of the class (if space is available) is \$10 per child per class. Check out Children’s Classes on our website for additional information and registration forms. If you have any questions, please email Ms. Hawley directly at: lhawley@mtrp.org, or you may call her at 619-582-6261.

Sailors Volunteer

by AM2 Mica Brooks

On June 1, 2011, 32 sailors from Strike Fighter Squadrons VFA-192, VFA-41, Electronic Attack Squadron VAQ-133, and Stennis participated in a project at the Mission's Trails Regional Park in San Diego to maintain the park's natural beauty. Amongst the ever-watching eye of the surrounding mountains, they rehabilitated over two miles of nature trails throughout the park.

Deemed "Earth Warriors," these sailors teamed up with Ranger Melvyn Naidas, field operations ranger, to complete three key assignments.

"We have several unapproved trails in the park," said Ranger Naidas. "It becomes a safety issue for our patrons." The warriors worked diligently to perform the task of closing these trails with the use of nearby native plant life.

"The trails are a natural path for the wild life in the area," said Logistics Specialist Seaman Kyle Buchanan, of VFA-192. "These trails are not meant for human travel. Putting up a fence would stop everything and it takes away from the scenery."

While some closed off unapproved trails, others worked to brush back vegetation on the approved trails. Cutting back the overgrowth in a specific way allows the plants to live while also providing a safe passage for travelers to enjoy the park. The final task was to reinforce the Erosion Control and Prevention Measures of water management runoff guides, known as earth berms, along various trails.

"When rain water runs down the path it will create a rut in the trail," said Ranger Naidas. "The berms create a way for the water to run off the trail."

"I thoroughly enjoyed the time we had out here," said Yeoman Second Class Karen Kitchens, from USS John C. Stennis. "I will definitely have to come back."

"Sometimes it's the little things that make a big impact in life," said Logistics Specialist Second Class Paul Virgili, of VFA-192. "This was definitely no exception."

FIRST PLACE - COLOR (PEOPLE, FLORA & FAUNA)



CHERYL OLD - SONG OF THE MEADOWLARK

Visit Our Gift Shop

Come to the Mission Trails Visitor and Interpretive Center and visit our Gift Shop. We have an interesting line of items relating to the study and enjoyment of nature.

Open seven days a week from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Art Exhibits

July 16 – August 12, 2011
Reception: July 17, 1:00 - 4:00 pm
Group Show

August 13 – September 9, 2011
Reception: August 14, 1:00 - 4:00 pm
Dolwain Green: Photography

September 10 – October 7, 2011
Photography Arts Group (PAG)

October 8 – November 4, 2011
Paradise Textile Artists

Lizard, continued from p. 1

from the Greek words phrynos, meaning toad, and soma, meaning body. So horned lizards are “toad bodied”. Like lizards they have scales, a tail, five clawed toes (toads have four toes).

Horned lizards representing 13 species inhabit the western United States and up into southern Canada and down into northern Mexico. The species indigenous to Mission Trails is the Coast Horned Lizard, *Phrynosoma coronatum*. The species name is from Latin meaning “crowned”.

To survive in the harsh environment in which horned lizards live, as well as to avoid predators, the horned lizard will use many different tactics and characteristics to survive. Its broad, flat body provides a large surface area for solar heating and catching rain drops for hydration. Their camouflage and sedentary nature make them difficult to see. The pointy scales make them hard to swallow and though it may not prevent them from being eaten, the scales have been known to kill the predator. Rattlesnakes have been found dead with an equally dead horned lizard stuck in its mouth because of the scales.

The broad body, short legs and scales along its side and head make movement through brush awkward. Speed is not one of the horned lizard’s defenses. As a matter of fact, because of the difficulty of getting through brushy areas, they often hang out in the middle of trails where they depend on camouflage and being motionless.

Perhaps the most unusual defensive tactic of the horned lizard is its ability to shoot a narrow stream of blood out of its eyes. The blood stream can be shot from one or both eyes, is about the thickness of horsehair and is projected as far as six feet. Interestingly, there is no evidence that it will use blood in defending itself against snakes, roadrunners, or grasshopper mice, but it does against fox, coyote or other canine-like critters.

After mating, the female Coast Horned Lizard will lay anywhere from 6 to 21 eggs in an underground nest which she digs. Depending on heat and moisture content of the soil, it takes 5 to 9 weeks for the eggs to begin

to hatch and baby horned lizards to emerge from the eggs, reach the surface and begin fending for themselves. Studies have shown that not all eggs in a clutch will hatch. As the babies grow, they molt but unlike a snake which molts all of its skin in one ordeal, the molting of horned lizards takes place over a couple of days and skin flakes off in large irregular patches.

Though the Coast Horned Lizard will eat beetles, spiders, termites and other small invertebrates, their main source of food are native ants, especially Harvester Ants. Unfortunately with the introduction of non-native ants, among them the Argentine ant, native ant colonies have been wiped out in many areas thereby reducing the source of food and populations of horned lizards. Loss of habitat due to human activity has further reduced their numbers.

Though horned lizards are not considered endangered, many states have laws against killing, selling or removing them from the area where they are found. In California the collection for commercial purposes has been prohibited since 1981.

References:

Sherbrooke, Wade C., Introduction to Horned Lizards, University of California Press, 2003

Howell, Bill, Dinosaur Look-alike: Horned Lizard Looks Jurassic, MTRP Trail Guide Notes

Website: sdnhm.org/fieldguide/herps/phry-cor.html

Knapping, continued from p.4

flint knapping took place. This fact could lead some poor unsuspecting archaeological student down a long and winding rabbit hole.

To begin, Dr. Gross demonstrated the technique for creating a flake from the raw material. In this case he used a large mass, at least 30 pounds, of Mahogany Obsidian. Obsidian is a volcanic glass formed by rapidly cooling lava, which is usually found in an opaque dark black, but, sometimes impurities make the glass a beautiful mahogany brown. Well protected by thick leather, he rested the obsidian on his thigh and chipped several large plates with an antler ham-

Notable Donations

April 1 – June 30, 2011

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Business Donors

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mer. Then, the large plate was roughly shaped into the arrow point form by smaller hammer stones and antler strikes. The final shape and thickness of the arrow point was achieved by precisely flaking tiny chips away by a method called “pressure flaking.” The point of a soft metal spike of copper is precisely placed along the edge of the work, then pressure is applied and the point is made to slip off the edge into the leather protected hand. This process takes practice to perfect, but, produces very fine chips and shards. By directing the force and angle of the copper point, the work can be made thinner without changing the shape, or the shape can be changed without changing the thickness. This is how stone tools were “sharpened” in the field if they were dulled or chipped.

Everyone in the class produced at least one point, some produced two or three, but, in the end we all learned something about history, the Kumeyaay, and a great lesson about patience and persistence.

Mission Trails Regional Park Donor Opportunities

By donating to Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, you are preserving the past and investing in the future.

Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation provides opportunities for individuals, businesses, community organizations, and foundations to support a variety of programs and projects within the park. Community support is important to ensure adequate funding to maintain the award winning Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor and Interpretive Center and the multiple amenities the park has to offer.

Special event and project sponsorship are also available. Sponsorship for Explore Mission Trails Day, an annual event held each May, range from \$500 to \$5,000. Exhibit sponsorships begin at \$2,500. Bench and table sponsorships range from \$1,500 to \$4,000 depending upon the item and its location in the park. Contact Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation at 619-668-3280 or mtrp@mtrp.org for additional information.

Names of contributors of \$1,000 or more will be engraved on the donor board displayed at the Visitor and Interpretive Center. Yearly donations of \$100 or more are accumulated from year-to-year for donor recognition purposes.

Become a Business Friend of Mission Trails

Business Donors making contributions of \$100 to \$500 are eligible for a web site link from the Mission Trails web site for a period of six months. Business Donors making contributions of \$500 and above are eligible for a period of one year.

Our Funds ... You may designate your donation for one or more of the following funds.

Friends of Mission Trails - General support for all Park programs.

Trail Maintenance

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Education Programs

Library Books and Supplies

Lake Murray

Endowment Funds

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Other ways you may donate ...

Memorial or In Honor Of gifts - Honor a friend or family member with a donation.

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Gifts of Securities - To allow donors to realize full tax deductions for appreciated stock, MTRP Foundation accepts gifts of stock. Contact 619-668-3280 or mtrp@mtrp.org for further details.

Wills - Remember MTRP Foundation in your will.

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

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Roland Roberge, Editor.

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FIRST PLACE - YOUTH DIVISION



SERENITY BY DAVID SATODA