

# Mission Trails Regional Park News

Volume 23, Number 2

-- A Publication of the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation --

Spring 2012

## Explore Mission Trails Day

**Come join the fun!**

Join the Mission Trails staff and volunteers in celebrating the 10th annual Explore Mission Trails Day. This exciting celebration, highlighting everything Mission Trails has to offer, will be held on Saturday, May 19, 2012. Most activities will be between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at the Visitor and Interpretive Center and the

*EMTD, continued on p. 6*

## Art in the Park Fundraiser

The Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation is teaming up with the plein air painters of the California Art Club (CAC) for a fun-filled, art sale/fund raiser the evening of July 7, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at the MTRP Visitor Center. The CAC members have been invited to create a painting at Mission Trails, now through the middle of June, with the best paintings for sale on the evening of July 7. Proceeds will benefit the MTRP Foundation and the California Art Club. Meet the artists, enjoy wine, cheese, and chocolate, and purchase a painting. Members of the San Diego Native American Flute Players will also be performing. Tickets are \$35 for individuals and \$50 per couple. All the information is on our website at [mtrp.org](http://mtrp.org).

## Coast Live Oak Magestic Conservationist

**By Audrey F. Baker**

They inspire us by creating enchanted landscapes and, by their massive, twisted architecture, present eerie, haunting visions. At MTRP, you'll find them growing on valley floors, among rocky canyons, sage and chaparral, along the river and above you on cliffs overlooking the gorge.

Arboreal champions, Coast Live Oaks (CLOs) play an extensive role in conservation and ecology. The massive canopy provides a dense overstory that aids in the protection of threatened and endangered species. True survivors, live oaks thrive in our mild coastal

climate, prepared to face the challenges of drought, insects and fire, all while serving as nursery, protector and food source for a surprising variety of wildlife.

Its genus name, *Quercus*, hints at the long history of mankind's association with oaks. It comes from two Celtic words, "quer" and "cuez", meaning fine tree. Monarchs of the woodlands, riparian and grassland fringes of MTRP, these impressive trees are the overlords of our green and golden wild San Diego.

*Oak, continued on p. 4*



Photo by David Cooksy



## A Message From Executive Director Jay Wilson

We are always making a concerted effort to enhance your visit to the Mission Trails Visitor Center. There are over 300 different wildflowers that bloom throughout Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP). Now you may view ninety-nine of Mother Nature's delights through the spectacular nature photography of Volunteer Trail Guide Gerry Tietje. His presentation is now showing on the iMac monitor adjacent to the seismic monitor in the Visitor Center Exhibit Hall. Each brilliant photograph, including my favorite, the Chocolate Lilly, is displayed with the name of the wildflower. It is on a continuous loop, allowing you to view this addition to the Visitor Center at any time. Two of our other key volunteers, Wendy Esterly and David Cooksey, are finishing up another continuous loop program featuring photographs of all the birds you may see in MTRP.

The MTRP Foundation is continuing to expand its educational programs. Last fall the Foundation, in conjunction with the San Diego County YMCAs, was awarded a 2012 Environmental Champions grant by SDG&E. As a result, this summer, 10 of the YMCAs throughout San Diego County will be participating in a four consecutive day

educational experience conducted by Alicia Berg, one of the Foundation's two Education Program Instructors. On the first and third day, Ms. Berg will visit one of the Ys and will present an educational program for the children. It will include live animals and discussions about animal and plant adaptation, protecting the environment, and preparing the children for a visit to Mission Trails. On the second day the children will visit MTRP for a field trip. On the fourth day the children will return to MTRP with their parents to participate in a work experience program.

The Visitor Center continues to be an active place with a variety of programs. Our art exhibitions in the Visitor Center gallery change every three weeks. During the five weeks between May 5 and June 8, our 20th annual Amateur Photo Contest entries will be on display. Our free concert series continues on the third Sunday of each month at 3:00 p.m. in the Visitor Center Theater. On April 15, Angela Tibbitt and Julia Schorn, presented a beautiful concert with their harps in the theater; on April 20, the play "Squawk!" will be performed in our outdoor amphitheater by students attending SDSU's School of Television, Theater, and Film. On Saturday, April 21 the Santee Chorus will perform in in the theater and on Sunday, April 22, members of "WriteOutLoud" will read the short story "Domain of Arnheim" by Edgar Allan Poe in the outdoor amphitheater. All programs are at 3:00 p.m. On the second Sunday of each month, except June, the San Diego Native American Flute Circle meets in the outdoor amphitheater from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Check out the events calendar on our home page for all our activities at the Visitor Center and in the park. Our annual Explore Mission Trails Day is Saturday, May 19 from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. It is always a great day to visit and enjoy the splendors and adventures of Mission Trails Regional Park.

### Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation

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# Mission Trails Honors Its Outstanding Volunteers

Congratulations to our Mission Trails volunteers who were honored at the 16th annual awards event on Saturday, February 4, 2012. Richard Griebe was named Volunteer of the Year for 2011. Richard, as the Nest Box Project Coordinator, has had a significant impact on the park. Due to his expertise and dedication, the project has expanded and fledged hundreds of birds in past years.

Other volunteers receiving awards for outstanding service in 2011 were: Lona Davies, Visitor Center; Linda Smith, Gift Shop; George Varga, Trail Guide; Frank Jablonsky, Park Patrol; Terry Gaughen, Trail Restoration; Cathy Perry, Park Beautification; Doug Fenske, Habitat Restoration. Recognition plaques provided by Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation and a certificate of recognition from San Diego City Councilmember Marti Emerald were presented to each of these outstanding volunteers.

Volunteers were also recognized for their hours and years of service. Most recorded volunteer hours were: Terry Gaughen 1,339, Tom Thompson 813, Fred Kramer 434.

Five year service awards were presented to Paul Barbour, Danny Briggs, Lona Davies, Ruth Gibbs, Robert Graham, Robert Holmes, Petra Koellhoffer, Betty Matthews, Stacey Miller, Brian Moehl, Ondina Moehl, William Sulzbach and Tim West.

Ten year service certificates were presented to Luann Wright, Brian Berg and Linda Smith.

Fifteen year service certificates were presented to Daniece Moden, Dan Leonard and Joanne Prescott.

A very special thank you goes out to Sue & Richard Braun and Gary & Nancy Krueger for donating the evening's dinner.

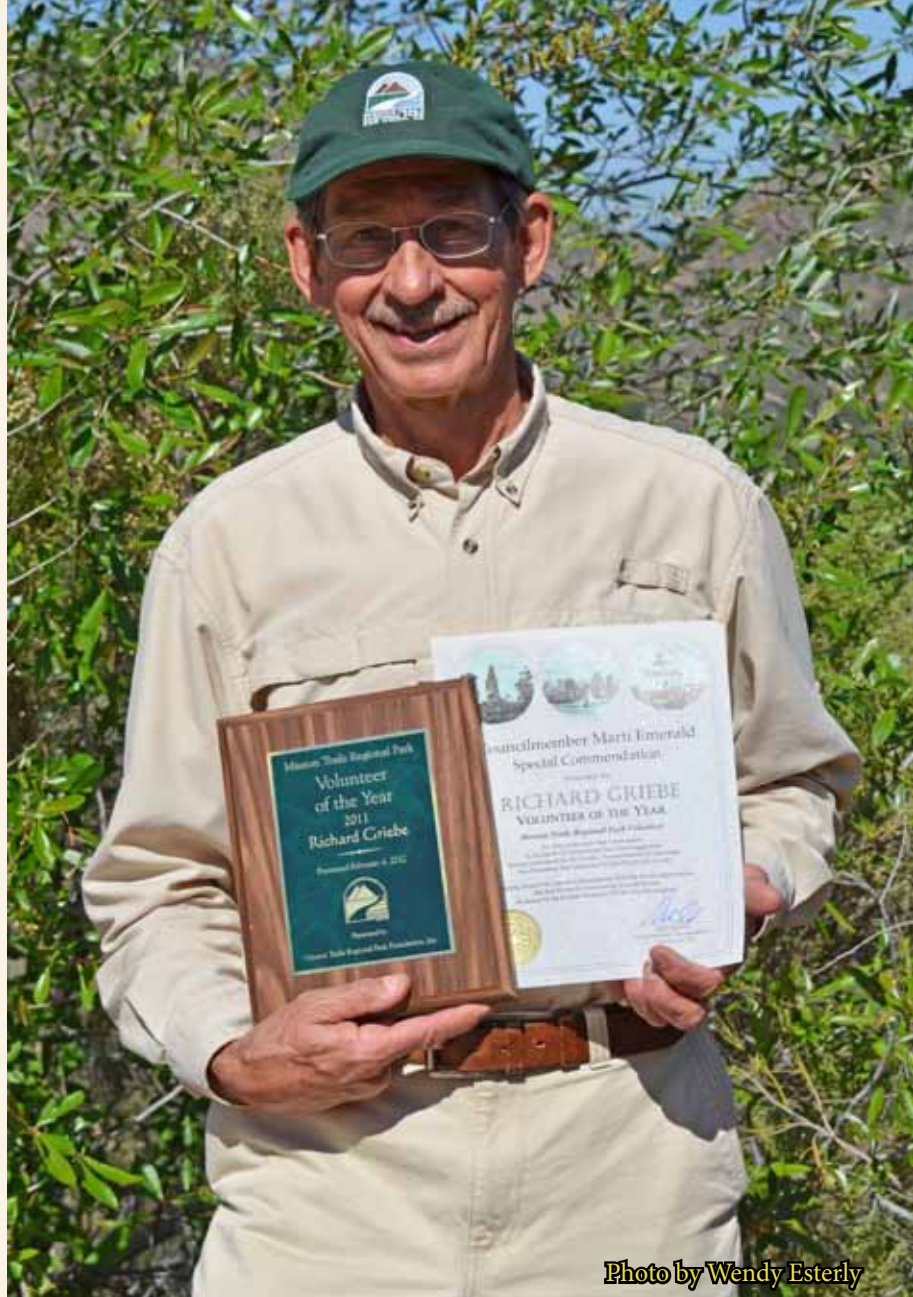


Photo by Wendy Esterly

*Volunteer of the Year  
Richard Griebe*

Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation extends sincere thanks to our 2011 Volunteer Awards Ceremony door prizes contributors.

- Arely's Bakery**
- Birch Aquarium at Scripps**
- Cheer's Deli**
- Chula Vista Nature Center**
- Einstein Bros Bagels**
- The Original Golden Bagel**
- The Trails Neighborhood Eatery**
- Viejas Enterprises**
- Windy's Flowers**

The annual volunteer awards event is sponsored by Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation and the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department.

## Oak, *continued from p. 1*

Coast Live Oaks are an essential part of our southwestern heritage. Brilliant in sunshine, eerie in mist and enchanted in moonlight, for the Kumeyaay, our local oak represents a symbol of fertility, communication with the spirit world, oneness with the Earth, and the bounty provided by Tuchaipai, the great creator. The habitat spawn by Coast Live Oaks sustain more wildlife than any other land-based plant.

Native Americans made ample use of its offerings in their daily lives. Just to hint at its utility, they depended on its acorns as a food source and trade item, and its bark and leaves for medicine. CLO wood equipped them with a myriad of tools, including rabbit sticks and bows. Its fuel fired their pottery.

Franciscan monks established their missions by following the distribution

of oaks, and settlers used its leaves for livestock feed and its wood for farm and ship implements.

Today the Coast Live Oak stands as a seminal symbol for ecological consciousness, reminding us of the important role it plays in maintaining the delicate balance of the species, and in preserving natural California for future generations.

Magnificent in architecture, the luxuriant foliage literally absorbs light, and can form crowns up to 130' in diameter. Resting under this superstructure, hikers can enjoy up to a 15 degrees drop from outside temperatures. For animals, the coolness provides thermal relief, hiding places from predators, and nesting sites.

Life under the canopy is a rich micro-habitat with diverse plant/animal interaction. The abundant food

products produced by CLO – acorns, leaves, flowers, twigs, sap, roots and pollen – attract and support a thriving wildlife community.

Coast Live Oak's characteristically spectacular canopy, the hearty weather-challenged branches, impressive trunk, and delicate new growth twigs represent home to a large number of nesting birds. Among the resident nesters are the regal red-tailed and the red-shouldered hawk. The Cooper's hawk aided by its short-wings, dives into the oak leafage to hunt, and nests there to raise its young.

On the opposite side of the size spectrum, the tiny Anna's hummingbird, weighing in at 0.15 oz, constructs its diminutive nest, crafted with spider webs and downy vegetable matter, on new growth areas among reddish twigs.

*Oak, continued on p. 5*



Photo by David Cooksy

## Oak, continued from p. 4

Other resident birds include Lawrence's and Lesser Goldfinch, white-tailed kite, bushtit, Bewick's wren and cavity-nesting titmouse, Acorn and Nuttall's woodpecker, and White-breasted Nuthatch. Migrants abound – including the Ash-throated flycatcher, Wood-Pewee and Bullock's oriole.

Acorns are the most recognizable food source offered by CLO. In the fall, mule deer can consume 300 acorns per day! They browse extensively on leaves and twigs, but can also eat bark from the main trunk. Scrub jays, ground squirrels, and acorn woodpeckers busily cache acorns for future meals. Those not retrieved may grow as representative of a new generation of trees.

Black-tailed jackrabbits, desert cottontails, Bott's gophers, brush and deer mice gobble up oak foliage. Pocket gophers are among those nibbling on roots. Two bird species consume entire catkins, the pendulous flower clusters that show in early spring.

Reptiles and amphibians also benefit by feasting on insects that dine on oak or take refuge among the organically-rich leaf litter. Alligator lizards seek insects, eggs and young birds, while gopher snakes prowl and California king snake pursues its meal – watch out rattlers! The arboreal salamander searches at night for crickets and termites on tree limbs and among the debris.

The source for all this wildlife activity is the variety and sheer numbers of insects associated with Coast Live Oaks. While contemplating the tree, perhaps your eye has fixed on a strange apple-like growth within the canopy. That oak gall is a nursery for the Cynipidae wasp.

You may notice a California sister caterpillar nibbling on a leaf, a bee hive established in a trunk crevice, or, if really lucky, the endangered Least

Bell's vireo attracted by the insect populations. These observations only hint at the true numbers. Millions of insects of hundreds of species can inhabit a single mature tree.

Some may be familiar – oak leaf munchers, like the oak, tent and tussocks moth caterpillars, and sucking insects like tree hoppers, white flies and aphids. Others remain unseen, and their presence known only by exit holes left behind. All are witness to the immeasurable food supply provided by Coast Live Oak, and to its central role in an immense food chain.

Coast Live Oak supports the natural community 24/7. Twilight hours and nighttime is the right time for nocturnal creatures such as owls, bats, and woodrats. CLO is very accommodating!

The Big-eared Woodrat, less active in the daylight, has a close association with our live oaks. Under CLO protection, her on-ground, decades-old midden continues to sustain generations. Aside from child-rearing activities, a solitary female occupies the large, complex nest. Constructed of grasses, oak twigs and branches, it is replete with compartments to house additional wildlife. Like other rodents, her presence attracts natural enemies such as the gray fox (a tree climber), coyotes, bobcats, owls and snakes. When nests are built within trees, CLO is the tree of choice! Acorns are a principal of the diet; oak leaves and oak-related fungi can sustain the animal's water requirements in times of drought.

The woodrat is well aware that the Great Horned Owl and the cavity-nesting Barn Owl are on the night-shift, too. The Great Horned occupies the same niche as its diurnal counterpart, the red-tailed hawk. In fact, because it is an earlier nester (January/February), it often occupies its alternate's nest.

And what's a big, hoary oak tree without a few bats adding to the ambiance? Bats

are the biggest consumer of night-flying insects. Both resident and migrant species find ample food stores among the CLO and employ its branches as resting sites.

Experienced in daylight or at night, Coast Live Oak is truly a majestic natural wonder. The range of wildlife it supports is staggering, and its imposing presence has long touched our imagination. Like the Kumeyaay who sustain a deep religious connection to the oak and the spirits that dwell within, through our admiration, we derive respect for the power and resilience of Nature. We are all part of the centuries-old relationship between man and oak.

*Author's note: We, in turn, must do our part to insure Coast Live Oaks continue to flourish. The gold-spotted oak borer is a real threat to our mature oaks. Observing restrictions on imported firewood will aid in limiting its spread.*

## VISITOR CENTER ART EXHIBITS

April 14 – May 4, 2012

Solo: Scott Streit, Photography

May 5 – June 8, 2012

Amateur Photography Contest

June 9 – 15, 2012

Grossmont High School District

June 16 – July 6, 2012

Debbie Atkinson,

Oil & watercolor

Lee Atkinson, Photography

July 7 – 27, 2012

California Art Club



## Equestrian Staging Area Comfort Station Nears Completion

Those of you who frequently use the Equestrian Staging Area to access the park will be happy to know that there will soon be an alternative to using the portable toilet facility. The MTRP Citizens' Advisory Committee and Task Force were instrumental in the construction of a new comfort station located between the two arenas. This new facility should be up and flushing for this year's popular Explore Mission Trails Day on May 19.

## Summer Twilight Walks

Join MTRP Trail Guides this summer for FREE Saturday evening guided walks in the park and learn about changes that occur after sundown.

**June 16th at 7:15 p.m.**

**July 21st at 7:15 p.m.**

**August 18th at 6:45 p.m.**

**September 15th at 6:00 p.m.**

These walks last for approximately 1.5 hours and meet at the Kumeyaay Lake Campground's Entry Station. Please be sure to bring along a flashlight!

More info at 619-668-3281  
or [mtrp.org/events.asp](http://mtrp.org/events.asp)

## EMTD, continued from p. 1

Equestrian Staging Area. The 2012 event, Connecting Children with Nature, will feature free guided nature walks, talks and programs throughout the park, including live animals, and special programs for children. The San Diego Natural History Museum and Scholastic Publishing's Ms. Frizzle™ and The Magic Schoolbus© will present a special program for children about coyotes in the amphitheater at the Visitor and Interpretive Center. Other activities at the Visitor Center will include crafts for children, Explore Stations, sunspot viewing and guided nature walks. There will be free pony rides, a climbing wall, crafts for children, and Discovery Stations at the Equestrian Staging Area. The Lake Murray and Santee Kiwanis Clubs will sell hamburgers, veggieburgers, hotdogs and refreshments at the Mission Trails Visitor Center and Equestrian Staging Area respectively.

Shuttle service between the various parking locations will be available from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. See the Explore Mission Trails Day information attachment for event and parking information.

Sponsors for the 2012 Explore Mission Trails Day celebration include -  
Title Sponsors: City of San Diego Special Promotional Programs, County of San Diego and Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, Republic Services, Inc.  
Community Sponsors: Olive Garden Italian Restaurants, SDG&E - A Sempra Energy utility, Superior Ready Mix, Quail Brush Genco, LLC.  
Pony Ride Sponsor: Kaiser Permanente.  
Neighborhood Sponsors: Five Star Tours & Charter Co.

Explore Mission Trails Day is presented by the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department, Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, and San Diego City Councilmember Marti Emerald.

## Visit Our Gift Shop

Come to the Mission Trails Visitor 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 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

## Notable Donations January 1 – March 31, 2011

**Steward - \$5,000 - \$9,999**  
City of San Diego Special Promotional Programs

**Patron - \$2,500 - \$4,999**  
Pardee Homes  
Superior Ready Mix

**Founder - \$1,000 - \$2,499**  
Rita and Jerry Bierman -  
in memory of Matthew Stein  
Marie Tuthill

**Trailblazer - \$500-\$999**  
Diane Nelson & David McLaren  
Pat Abbott  
Howard Runk  
The San Diego Foundation

**Path Finder - \$100-\$499**  
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Dr. and Mrs. Richard Braun  
Hayes Family Trust  
Charles Haynes and Ninh Dao  
Ann Krase -  
*in Memory of Lyn Olsson*  
Gary and Nancy Krueger  
Katheryn Krug  
James and Nan McKay  
Charles and Ann Nickel  
Lyn and Ola Olsson  
Robert and Constance Plaisted  
Nancy Varah and Lea Goynes -  
*in memory of Vernon Collins*  
Mark and Karen Zatt

# 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. Sponsorships 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](mailto: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*
- Tree and Habitat Maintenance*
- Education Programs*
- Library Books and Supplies*
- Lake Murray*
- Endowment Funds*
  - General Endowment Fund*
  - Library Endowment Fund*

**Other ways you may donate ...**

- Memorial or In Honor Of gifts** - Honor a friend or family member with a donation.
- Matching funds** - Identify Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Foundation for a matching funds contribution if your employer has a policy of matching charitable gifts.
- 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](mailto: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.

**Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Inc.**  
One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, CA 92119-1008

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Business Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

You may designate your donation for one or more of the following funds. Please indicate the amount.	<b>Donor Levels</b>
Friends of Mission Trails - General support for all Mission Trails programs and projects. \$ _____	\$25 Individual
MTRP Foundation Endowment Fund - Earnings used for programs and projects..... _____	\$50 Family
Special Funds	\$100 Pathfinder
Education Program Fund - Funds used for education program..... _____	\$500 Trailblazer
Library Fund - Books and supplies for the library..... _____	\$1,000 Founder
Library Endowment Fund - Earnings used for library books and supplies..... _____	\$2,500 Patron
Trail Maintenance - Trail maintenance and improvement projects..... _____	\$5,000 Steward
Tree and Habitat Maintenance - To help maintain the park's habitat..... _____	\$10,000 Sponsor
Lake Murray - Special projects at Lake Murray..... _____	\$25,000 Benefactor
Total Donation - Make check payable to MTRP Foundation and mail to address above.... _____	\$50,000 Trustee
	\$100,000 Director

Charge my donation to VISA \_\_\_\_\_ MC \_\_\_\_\_ Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Card holder's signature \_\_\_\_\_

**To donate online, visit our web site at [mtrp.org/donors.asp](http://mtrp.org/donors.asp)**

*Mtrp Foundation staff use only: Date of check \_\_\_\_\_ Check# \_\_\_\_\_ Database \_\_\_\_\_ Letter \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ Web \_\_\_\_\_*



**Mission Trails  
Regional Park Foundation**

One Father Junipero Serra Trail  
San Diego, CA 92119

Visitor and Interpretive Center: 619-668-3281  
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Email: [mtrp@mtrp.org](mailto:mtrp@mtrp.org)  
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*Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Inc., established 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 the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Inc., published four times a year.*

*Roland Roberge, Editor.*

A COPY OF THIS AND PAST NEWSLETTERS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE: [mtrp.org/newsletter.asp](http://mtrp.org/newsletter.asp)

# Meet Our 2012 Trail Guide Graduates

Top row (l to r): Chuck Borso, Nora Borso, Peggy Goings, Miles Pitcairn, Tina Rysedorph, Michele Roman, Mike Guarino, Evelyn Schwarz, Geoff Hasenauer, Zac Keane; Middle row (l to r): Gary Ruyle, Steve Schmidtke, Vernon Clinton, Jay Simpson, Linda Stafford, Martha Jenkins, Teresa Keane, Theresa Williams; Bottom row (l to r): Stuart Bossie, Mike Dowling, Lory Perfect, Andy Quinn, Bron Anders, Ann Goudreau, Jeremy Gagnon. Not pictured: Kyle Connors. Photo: Wendy Esterly.

