

# Mission Trails Regional Park News

Volume 25, Number 3

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

Summer 2014

## Kumeyaay Lake Campground Reopens

After a three year closure, the Kumeyaay Lake Campground was officially reopened in a ceremony with elected officials, community leaders and members of the public on Friday, June 13. San Diego Councilmember Scott Sherman, whose district includes the campground and

Mission Trails Regional Park, hosted a press conference and lock breaking ceremony at 10:30 am on Friday to announce the campground's reopening and to officially welcome back visitors to Kumeyaay Lake Campground for overnight camping. Fellow Councilmembers Lorie Zapf and

Sherri Lightner joined Councilmember Sherman at the press conference, along with former San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy and former Councilmember Jim Madaffer, who represented the district from 2000 - 2008.

Campers and park guests also joined Councilmember Sherman, Park Rangers, and members of the Kumeyaay Nation at 7:00 pm that night at the campground for a marshmallow roast, campfire songs, and traditional stories told by Stan Rodriguez, a member of the Santa Isabel Band of the Kumeyaay Nation.

"The Mission Trails Regional Park area was my backyard growing up. I spent a lot of my childhood here before it was even designated as a park," said Councilmember Scott Sherman. "I was very pleased to work with my City Council colleagues to open the campground once again to overnight camping so that a new generation of San Diego children can enjoy the same recreational opportunities that I had."

Park visitors have been allowed access for day use of the campsites, but have not had overnight camping access since September, 2011 when the City of San Diego closed it due to budget constraints. Councilmember Scott Sherman, whose district includes the campsites and Mission Trails Regional Park, was instrumental in securing

**Campground, continued on p. 6**

### *Lock Cutting Ceremony Presided Over by Councilmember Scott Sherman*





## A Message From Executive Director Jay Wilson

Our big news is the Kumeyaay Lake Campground (KLC) has reopened thanks to the effort of Councilmember Scott Sherman. More information about the campground can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. In addition to the on-going effort of Councilmember Sherman to secure funding for KLC, a large number of man-hours by volunteers contributed to making everything ready for the campers now enjoying Friday and/or Saturday night camping under the stars. One group in particular, the Tierrasanta Kiwanis Club, annually donates funds to the Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Foundation. This year, along with their Serra High School Key Club, they contributed 60 volunteer hours at the KLC, spreading nearly 50 cubic yards of mulch to help retain moisture in the soil and control weeds.

Another piece of good news is that MTRP recently expanded by over 1,000 acres at the east end of Stonebridge Parkway adjacent to Scripps Ranch. This addition is known as West Sycamore and includes seven miles of new trails to be explored. This brings the total to over 60 miles of trails in MTRP. Rangers Araceli Dominguez and Andrew Miller are primarily responsible for West Sycamore. Along with Trail Guide Steve Haiman, Araceli, Andrew, and I were invited to make a presentation at the June meeting of the Scripps Ranch Civic Association. Thank you to Scripps Ranch for such a warm welcome and for their enthusiasm and support for West Sycamore.

Throughout the year MTRP and the MTRP Foundation benefit from individuals, organizations and businesses giving a helping hand in a variety of ways. Recently, the MTRP Foundation received a \$10,000 grant from The Parker Foundation to help fund a part-time grant writer. The MTRP Foundation was also just awarded a \$5,000 grant from REI to provide Rangers with WiFi access tablets for use in the field, since they are now responsible for nearly 7,000 acres. In the next few months the Visitor Center is set to benefit from a \$60,000 energy-efficiency upgrade to include new LED lighting in and around the building. Through the donation of time and expertise by Don Teemsma, president of Ideal Plumbing, Heating, Air & Electrical, and Jeff Ferree, Ideal's Vice President of Electrical, they provided the City of San Diego with a full evaluation and recommendations for the lighting/energy efficiency upgrade.

On June 1 the MTRP Foundation held its first Boy Scout Merit Badge Class led by Merit Badge Counselor Alicia Berg, who is also an Education Program Instructor for the MTRP Foundation. "There were 26 Boy Scouts in the three-hour class on reptiles and amphibians that included class room instruction with live animals, and a guided nature hike." The class is taught specifically to the merit badge requirements and provides a strong foundation for the merit badge so each scout can complete the requirements on their own. Other merit badge classes to be offered this summer will be Astronomy and Insects. Check the Boy Scout webpage for more information and to register. In July, Alicia Berg is planning her first class for Girl Scouts.

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## SUMMER HAS COME AND AUTUMN BECKONS

Summer is here at last and children are out of school. Families will be coming to Mission Trails Regional Park in search of recreation. After a hike, what is next? Bring a picnic lunch to one of our convenient picnic tables that are scattered in the park. Then comes a visit to the Visitor Center, of course. Do visit the Interpretive Center, the Library, and the current art show in the Gallery, and then be sure to stop at the Gift Shop to see what we have to offer.

We specialize in items that are specific to our beautiful park: books on botany and history, walking sticks, and Kumeyaay pottery. We also have wonderful items for children, items that are fun and interesting as well as educational.

There are wonderful children's books that focus on the natural world. "Nico the Gnatcatcher and the Upside Down River" was researched, written, and illustrated by 47 seventh grade students at San Diego's Tech Middle Media Arts to bring awareness to and celebrate the San Diego River. "My Ancestors' Village" is about Dove, a young Kumeyaay girl who lived in San Diego County long, long ago and tells us about her family and how they lived.

There are also books that coordinate with our Folkmanis Puppets, such as Way Out West Lives a Coyote Named Frank, Interview With a Tarantula, and Baby Rattlesnake. The last is written with the story in English and Spanish on facing pages. Did you know that rattlesnake in Spanish is "viborata de cascabel"? What a beautiful name for a dangerous snake!

All our puppets are cuddly and soft, fun, and allow children to express themselves through creative play. There are finger puppets for tiny hands as well. With or without a book they all provide links to study of our animals' lives and habitats.

We also have a wonderful jigsaw puzzle of our own Old Mission Dam that is just the right size for small hands. Please visit and let us share with you!

*Crews, continued from rear cover.*

are the visitors in their home. It's not just the hikers who are guilty of this, mountain bikers who have grown bored with the park's many official trails, have also created new, unauthorized trails, some going right through the middle of sensitive habitat areas with rare, threatened and endangered plant and animal species!

Another inevitable side-effect of having a lot of people passing through is the trash that often gets left behind. I'm not talking about the trash and recyclable items that are put in the proper receptacles, but the littered items carelessly or deliberately tossed aside. My personal favorite (yes, I'm being sarcastic now) is the plastic bag full of dog poop left on the ground, or even worse, tossed off-trail into the bushes! I just don't get it – if a person has already gone through the trouble of scooping their dog's poop into a bag (which is the gross part), why wouldn't they bother to just take it with them to dispose of it properly in the trash? Sadly, this "trend" seems to be growing. Speaking of sad things, there are also a number of people out there who apparently don't have anything better to do than mark up, carve on, break,

destroy or deface things in the park. I refer to these mysterious individuals as "G.A.L.s," as they seriously need to "Get a Life!"

San Diego's Mediterranean climate, with warm dry summers and mild wet winters, is not just desirable to residents and visitors, but is also desirable (unfortunately) to the many introduced nonnative plants that have invaded much of the natural open space areas. These "weeds" are bad news for local plants and wildlife, and if left alone to spread can outcompete, crowd out and completely take over essential native habitats.

Thank goodness for the monthly Volunteer Crews who come to MTRP's rescue! The Habitat Restoration Crew, previously led by Ranger Mika Shimada and now being led by yours truly (me), meets on the second Saturday of each month. The Trail Improvement Crew, previously led by Ranger Mel Naidas and now being led by Ranger Levi Dean, meets on the third Saturday of each month. And the Park Beautification Crew, previously led by Grounds Maintenance Worker Tom Folk and now being led by Ranger Andrew Miller, meets each fourth Saturday.

*Crews, continued on p. 6*

### *Habitat Restoration Crew*



# Another Successful Explore Mission Trails Day

Connecting Children with Nature was the theme of our 2014 Explore Mission Trails Day held on Saturday, May 17. This popular event features 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© presented a special program for children in the amphitheater at the Visitor and Interpretive Center. This year's Ms. Frizzle™ program featured coyotes. Other programs at the Visitor Center included crafts, live snakes and raptors, and sunspot viewing.

There were also free pony rides, a climbing wall, crafts for children, and many Discovery Stations at the East Fortuna Staging Area.

Thank you to our many corporate sponsors: Republic Services, SDG&E, Olive Garden Restaurants, Kaiser Permanente, and Superior Ready Mix. Business support through in-kind services was provided by San Diego Family Magazine, Mission Publishing Group, and O'Hungry's Restaurant.

The City and County of San Diego provided support through their Special Promotional Program Fund and Community Enhancement Fund respectively.

Explore Mission Trails Day was presented by the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department, Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, and San Diego City Councilmember Scott Sherman.

*Chasing Robots*



*Riding Ponies*





*Discovering Sunspots*



*Making Crafts*



*Discovering Bugs*



*Discovering Rocks*



*Climbing Rocks*



*Discovering Bees*



*Discovering Owls*

## Summer Twilight Walks

Join MTRP Trail Guides this summer for FREE Saturday evening guided walks in the park to learn about changes that occur as the sun goes down. These walks last approximately 1½ hours and start from the parking lot on the corner of Bushy Hill Dr. and Father Junípero Serra Trail, across from the Kumeyaay Lake Campground.

**August 16 at 7:30 pm**, Owl Prowl  
limited to 40 participants ~ Sign up at 619-668-3281.  
**September 20, 6:00 pm**, no reservation necessary.

### Campground, *continued from p. 1*

the approximately \$140,000 needed to provide the necessary campground staffing to have it open two nights a week. The campgrounds reopened to campers wishing to enjoy the park's breathtaking scenery, plants and animals at night. Funds were restored as part of the City's FY 2014 mid-year budget update and fully funded for the 2015 fiscal year. Councilmember Sherman is also the Chair of the Mission Trails Regional Park Task Force.

"The turnout for the reopening and for the first night of camping was wonderful," said Jay Wilson, Executive Director of the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation. "Mission Trails is again providing San Diegans with affordable, scenic and family-friendly camping opportunities that they can enjoy without ever leaving the City."

Forty-six campsites are available for reservation. Campsites cost \$20 a night and can be reserved through the online reservation system at this link: [SDRecConnect.com](http://SDRecConnect.com). For more information about Mission Trails Regional Park, visit [mtrp.org](http://mtrp.org)

### Crews, *continued from p. 3*

Both Habitat Restoration and Trail Improvement Crews meet at 8:00 am, by the flag poles in front of the Visitor Center. The Park Beautification Crew meets at 8:00 am at the Kumeyaay Lake Campground's Day Use Parking Lot. Each crew works until 12:00 noon at

## SAVE THE DATE

**October 11, 2014**  
**Mission Trails Regional Park**  
**Third Annual Art in the Park**  
**fundraising event.**

**For more informatio access:**  
<https://www.mtrp.org/assets/files/254611.pdf>

the latest, but depending on the project, things may wrap up much earlier. Participants 18 and older may just show up and sign in; those under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian and submit a signed waiver form.

Water, energy drinks and snacks will be provided by the crew leader, but it's a good idea to bring along a personal water bottle to refill. All participants are encouraged to wear long pants (even if it's warm, to protect their legs), sturdy, closed-toe shoes (no flip-flops!) and bring along a pair of work gloves; extra pairs will be available to borrow for those who do not have their own. On warm, sunny days, a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen are also recommended. Speaking of warm, sunny days, during the excessively hot months of July, August and September, all three Volunteer Crews go on hiatus and reconvene in October. So, come on out to MTRP's rescue this fall, and get your exercise for the day while contributing to a good cause at the same time!

## Notable Donations

April 1 – June 30, 2014

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# 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 us at 619-668-3280 or [mtrp@mtrp.org](mailto:mtrp@mtrp.org) for further details.

**Wills** - Remember MTRP Foundation in your will.

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### Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Inc.

One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, CA 92119-1008

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*Roland Roberge, Editor.*

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

# Volunteer Crews to the Rescue

By Ranger Heidi Gutknecht

For resident wildlife, Mission Trails Regional Park is a wonderful place to live, and for us humans, it is a wonderful place to visit. Being such a popular place, though, does have its drawbacks. For example, heavily used trails (such as the main Cowles Mountain trail at Golfcrest and Navajo) need constant repairs to keep up with the wear and tear of such a high volume of foot traffic. Unfortunately, not all the hikers stay on the established hiking trails, and opt for cutting the switchbacks for a shorter route to the top – I guess they haven’t experienced the joy of “taking time to stop and smell the sagebrush.”

Going off-trail not only causes erosion, it also tramples and destroys native vegetation, which provides food and shelter for local wildlife – remember, when visiting the park, it is we who

**Volunteer Crews, continued on p.3**

*Trail Maintenance Crew*

