



# Mission Trails Regional Park News

Volume 16 Number 1

Winter/Spring 2005

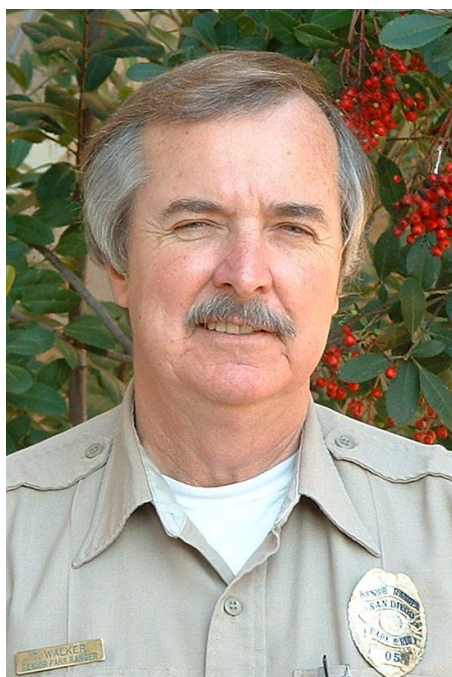
## Staff Changes

Mission Trails Regional Park has been fortunate to have outstanding city staff. It is always difficult when one of these dedicated individuals move on to other position. That is why we announce with great sorrow the departure of three of our finest.

**John Barone**, Senior Park Ranger at Mission Trails, has transferred to Otay Valley Regional Park to take over as the new Senior Park Ranger there. John has been with the City since 1999 as a Park Ranger at Balboa Park, Chollas Lake Park, and Black Mountain Open Space Park. He was promoted to Mission Trails Senior Ranger in April 2003. Prior to that, John has worked at the US Fish and Wildlife Service, California State Parks, the City of Chula Vista, and the San Dieguito River Park.

*Changes, continued on p.3*

## Welcome Back



Tracey Walker, Supervising Ranger for the City of Walnut Creek, has accepted a position as Senior Park Ranger at Mission Trails Regional Park. Tracey was a

*Walker, continued on p. 3*

## Featured Park Ecosystem

### Vernal Pools

#### Those mysterious puddles!

After the first few rains in winter, the vernal pools of Mission Trails Regional Park come to life. One of the most popular places to see a vernal pool in the park is on the west rim trail. Vernal pools are seasonally flooded depressions or “puddles” that provide life for a variety of endemic species. Endemic means that these species occur only in a specific area or region. Many of the species associated with vernal pools are highly endangered, mostly due to encroachment and habitat loss.

MTRP vernal pools are breeding grounds for a variety of plants and wildlife including the San Diego Fairy Shrimp and the Western Spadefoot toad. San Diego Fairy Shrimp are currently listed as endangered by the federal government; the Spadefoot is listed as a species of special concern by the state of California. The Fairy Shrimp is endemic to San Diego County. The Spadefoot is endemic to southern California and northern Baja.

All the species that rely on vernal pools for life go through a period of dormancy. This period of dormancy is called aestivation. Animals in colder climates go through a similar process called hibernation. When dormancy occurs in the summer, it’s referred to as aestivation. The first signs of rain signal the end of dormancy for the vernal pools.

When the rains come and the pools fill, the San Diego Fairy Shrimp

*Vernal Pools, continued on pg. 2*

## 5K run

For those of you who prefer running as your major use of the park, there is now a 5k run trail which utilizes the Visitor Center loop, Oak Grove loop and BMX loop trails. The trail head is at the Visitor Center. The route was mapped by volunteer Clark Rasmussen

with portions of the trail improved by Terry Gaughen. A map of the trail can be picked up at the Visitor Center front desk. The map includes descriptions of trail segments as well as GPS points along the trail. There is also run information at various locations along the trail.



## A Message From Councilmember Jim Madaffer

At the beginning of my first term in office we opened the campground. Four years later, at the beginning

of my second term in office, we had the official opening of the Mission Trails Equestrian Staging Area. I like that kind of symmetry. We had a festive opening on Saturday, December 4 for the new facility, which has an entrance off Mast Boulevard at Rte. 52 bordering Santee. The site has parking for vehicles with horse trailers, horse arenas, individual horse corrals, picnic and barbeque areas and trailheads. In the future there will be a building with all the amenities. Not only is there a new entrance, but there is also a new name for what is now a city street. We unveiled the new name - Mission Trails Circle.

Can you guess who was the first person to ride at the new facility? Our very own equestrian extraordinaire Joan Embery. She, along with Mayor Dick Murphy, San Diego Park & Recreation Director Ellen Oppenheim, Santee City Councilmember Brian Jones, Joe Morse of the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, and I had the privilege of officially dedicating the new Mission Trails Equestrian Staging Area.

And, I unofficially named Dorothy Leonard the Queen of Mission Trails Regional Park in recognition of all that she has done over the past several decades. She is one of the original members of the select group who had a vision of creating what is now one of the largest urban parks in the nation. Thank you, Dorothy.

Also, Jim Ambroso and Neil Mohr deserve a huge thank you for helping make the Equestrian Staging Area a reality. With their help, their company, San Diego Landfill Systems generously donated land so that we could finish Phase One as well as donated a picnic table.

Since I'm on the topic of special mentions, it was wonderful to see City employee Robin Shifflet receive a plaque and a bouquet as a special thanks for seeing this challenging project completed. How gratifying to see so many longtime

park supporters turn out to witness our latest milestone. I credit their dedication and determination as the reason why we accomplish major goals with repeated regularity. 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](mailto:jmadaffer@sandiego.gov). I invite you to visit my Web site at [JimMadaffer.com](http://JimMadaffer.com).

### *Vernal Pools, continued from pg. 1*

eggs hatch. These shrimp quickly mature and lay eggs of their own, then die when the pools dry. The cycle begins again the next time the pool fills with water. Scientists claim that the eggs can remain dormant for 25 years or more and that their eggs can even survive being digested by birds. This may explain how fairy shrimp move from pool to pool. Fairy shrimp are an important food source for the Spadefoot tadpoles and their decaying matter acts as a fertilizer for many of the vernal pool plants species.

For some unknown reason the Spadefoots pop out of their summer hiding holes and begin breeding in the wet vernal pools. Scientists speculate that the toads can feel the vibrations of the raindrops or they can feel the moisture from the rain. The male toads find the pools, secure a good breeding spot and begin calling the females to let them know where they are. The females attach their small eggs in bunches to vegetation in the pools. Females can lay several hundred eggs in a season. Once the tadpoles hatch, their lives are completely dependent on how much water is in the pool. If the pool dries before they mature into toads, they die. If there is plenty of water, the toads mature into miniature replicas of their parents, which takes about 8 weeks. The chances of a tadpole maturing to a miniature replica of its parent is rare. Thousands of tadpoles a year die in vernal pools because of a lack of water. But, these dead tadpoles still serve a purpose. They become fertilizer for endangered and rare plants that pop out just after the pools dry, or they act as a food source for future baby tadpoles.

If you're in the park and you happen to be on the west rim trail, keep an eye out for these unique endangered habitats.

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Please remember to let nature do its thing. Peer at them from a distance and avoid letting your dog drink from them. Do not add water to the pools or take tadpoles away from the pools. Adding tap water can critically alter the temperature and upset its unique balance. If you have questions or would like more info on Vernal pools, please contact the park's visitor center at, 619-668-3281.

Ranger Casey Smith

# Kumeyaay Lake Campground

Closed to camping  
Until March 4, 2005

**Note:** Due to a shortage of park staff, the campground is closed until March 4, 2005.

## Tracking Tidbits

Wild critters are our park's mystery books. We hike, bike and even camp smack dab in the middle of their living rooms, yet we see them only on occasion and know little of their lives. Right under our noses, though, lie a wealth of clues – we just need to look down. Soon you are bound to find tracks and signs and the opportunity to read the book to uncover the animals' secrets is yours!

Author Paul Rezendes, in the book "Tracking & the Art of Seeing" states "There is a whole novel in an owl's pellet". Though I can't see snuggling up



with a good owl pellet before going to bed, this declaration goes to the heart of tracking. It's about seeing the drama that unfolds in the lives of wild animals; stories written in the dirt, claw marks in a tree trunk, feathers scattered on the ground – and debris in an owl pellet. Once you start looking at things as a tracker, volumes become available to you.

Identifying a track is an accomplishment, but it is by following the track that you really get a sense of how an animal spent its day. Where did it stop to eat or rest, how did it mark its territory or why did it get chased off by or give chase to another critter. What you piece together of the animal's routine can lead you to sightings, great photo opportunities or just a sense of "ah-ha!".

Keep some things in mind though. First, if the track crosses a hard surface where the track won't show, don't spend much time looking for it. Walk a short distance in the direction the critter was headed and try to pick up the track, or just look around the area for some type of sign pointing the way it may have gone. If you reach a dead end, so be it. Remember, this as an adventure, not work! On to the next clue down the trail.

Most important, keep in mind that these are wild and, therefore, unpredictable creatures. Although most pose little threat to us, if cornered, some animals can be dangerously aggressive. Remember, we are visiting their living rooms and invading their space, so like us, they will protect it. Keep the rule of respect in mind and never crowd any animal.

Now it's time to hit the trails and start tracking!

Ranger Luanne Barrett

## Staff Changes

*Changes, continued from p. 1*

**Sue Pelley**, Park Ranger at Mission Trails, has been promoted to Senior Park Ranger for the Open Space Canyons. Sue worked for Torrey Pines State Reserve from 1991-1992; the Olivenhain Municipal Water District from 1992-1998, and has been a Park Ranger at Mission Trails since 1998. Sue oversees many of the interpretive and education programs at Mission Trails. She will take on the challenge of coordinating the work of over 30 citizen "Friends of Canyons" groups throughout the urban open space areas.

**Casey Smith**, Park Ranger at Mission Trails Regional Park, has been promoted to Senior Park Ranger for Balboa Park in the Developed Regional Parks Division. Casey received

his BA in History from Point Loma Nazarene University in 2000, worked as an Assistant Archivist at the San Diego Aerospace Museum for 2 years (2000-2002), and then became an Open Space Park Ranger at Mission Trails in 2002. Casey is looking forward to returning to Balboa Park in this new and challenging assignment.

The Mission Trails Foundation board and volunteers congratulate these dedicated Rangers and wish them the best of luck.

*Walker, continued from p. 1*

Supervising Ranger for San Diego County from 1979-1985; a Senior Park Ranger for the City of San Diego from 1992-2000; and has been a Park Ranger/Supervising Park Ranger for the City of Walnut Creek since 2000. Tracey has a BA in Social Work from SDSU (1973), and is looking forward to returning to his "roots" here in San Diego.

The Foundation Board and volunteers look forward to, once again, working with Ranger Walker.



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

**Proceeds go to MTRP Foundation.**



# Thank you to our many Mission Trails contributors in the year 2004

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City of San Diego Special Promotional Program Funds

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## Notable Donations

October - December 2004

**Steward** - \$5,000 – \$10,000  
 City of San Diego Special Promotional  
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**Patron** – \$2,500-\$5,000  
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## Mission Trails Events



### Thirteenth Annual Mission Trails Regional Park Photography Contest

All entries will be on display at the Visitor & Interpretive Center during June and July. Monetary awards will be presented to the winners of this juried event at a reception and awards ceremony on June 26, 2005

To acquire a contest entry form,  
go to [mtrp.org/photo\\_contest.asp](http://mtrp.org/photo_contest.asp)  
Or visit the Mission Trails visitor Center.

## ART exhibit



**Bill Goldschneider**  
Footprints in Nature  
Images in wood  
*until March 4th.*

**AQUA FEMME**  
This group, consisting of six local area artists,  
will be displaying paintings in  
water soluble medium  
*March 5th through April 16th.*



## Star Gazing

*Star Parties are cancelled during overcast conditions. For the comfort of those whose eyes are night adapted, please, no white flashlights, lanterns and spot lights around the telescope*

### Star Party with George Varga

**February 12, 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.**  
Orion Nebula and Saturn up to the East for viewing. Waxing Crescent Moon visible early before it sets behind the Fortuna Range.

**March 19, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**  
Saturn and waxing gibbous Moon in Gemini. Orion Nebula to the Southwest.

### April 23, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Because of Full Moon, deep sky objects will be pretty well washed out. However, Jupiter will be low to the Southeast, Saturn to the Southwest with Orion setting. Leo overhead.

### May 14, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

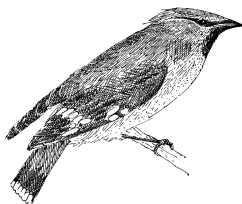
Waxing Crescent Moon and Saturn to the West with Jupiter almost overhead and somewhat to the South. Hercules Cluster rising in the East.

### Stars at Mission Trails with the San Diego Astronomy Association.

Second Friday of every month starting at dusk.

*For both star gazing events, meet at the day-use parking lot of the Kumeyaay Lake Campground. Telescopes are provided or you may bring your own.*

## Bird Walks



With Jay Rourke, Kerry Kenwood and Mike Wellik. All walks are the third Saturday of the month, 8:00-10:30 a.m.

February - Oak Grove Loop

March - Lake Murray

April - Old Mission Dam

May - Kumeyaay Lake

**For current and updated news and schedule of events, visit the Mission Trails Regional Park web site at [mtrp.org](http://mtrp.org).**

# Support Mission Trails Regional Park

## Volunteer Opportunities

There are numerous volunteer opportunities available. No prior experience needed. We provide any training necessary.

**At the Visitor Center**  
Front Desk  
Gift Shop

**Within the park**  
Trail Guide  
Park Patrol  
Work Crews



**The easiest way yet to support Mission Trails**

\*  
Simply go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) access the "sign up" link near the top of the page and follow the simple instructions. All it takes is five minutes.

## 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 because of 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.

### Wills

Remember Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation in your will.

### Gifts of Securities

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.

### 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 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 \* 33-028509.

## 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. Persons donating \$100 or more will be given a certificate of contribution. 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.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
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### Donor Levels

\$25 Individual _____	\$1,000 Founder _____	\$25,000 Benefactor _____
\$50 Family _____	\$2,500 Patron _____	\$50,000 Trustee _____
\$100 Path Finder _____	\$5,000 Steward _____	\$100,000 Director _____
\$500 Trailblazer _____	\$10,000 Sponsor _____	Other _____

### Special Funds

Please check fund(s) for which you wish your donation to be used.

General Park Support	_____
Library Fund	_____
Library Endowment	_____
Education Program Endowment	_____
Tree & Habitat Maintenance	_____
Trail Maintenance	_____
Lake Murray	_____

Make check payable to MTRP Foundation and send to:  
Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Attention Secretary/Treasurer  
One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, CA 92119-1008

Charge my donation to VISA \_\_\_ MC \_\_\_  
Card No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### Office Use Only

Check Date \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_  
Data Base \_\_\_ Letter \_\_\_ Donor Book \_\_\_  
\$100+ Certificate \_\_\_ Newsletter \_\_\_  
Web \_\_\_ \$1000+ Donor Board \_\_\_





**Mission Trails  
Regional Park Foundation**

One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, CA 92119-1008  
Visitor & Interpretive Center: (619) 668-3275  
MTRP Foundation: (619) 668-3280  
E-mail: mtrp@mtrp.org  
Web Site: www.mtrp.org

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# Thank You and Farewell



**Senior Ranger  
John Barone**



**New Senior Ranger  
Sue Pelley**



**New Senior Ranger  
Casey Smith**