



Mission Trails Regional Park News

Under Construction: A Firsthand Account of Kwaay Paay's Restoration

By Christopher Kellison

Upon arrival the members of AmeriCorps NCCC Team Green Seven were full of angst. We were from several different walks of life from all over the country, and had never worked a long-term project together. Would our morale we gained during our month long training last throughout six weeks of camping and manual labor? Would we be able to endure the physical toll of climbing Kwaay Paay every morning before even beginning our physical work? These questions and many more raced through our minds at lightning speeds. However, immediately after meeting the project sponsor, Ranger Mel Naidas, we were put at ease. He calmly explained the early project details in a very precise manner and our unified group confidence began to grow.

For the first section of the project we focused on installing straw wattles and jute nets in the burnt area of Kwaay Paay. The purpose of the wattles is to prevent further erosion that might cause rocks to fall down the mountain onto those climbing. The jute netting is there to provide protection for seeds and the soil so that life may return to the burnt area.

To install these items we had to first trench out different parts of the mountainside. This proved to be one of the most physically exhausting, yet enjoyable tasks. With our shovels and picks we dug into the rough terrain of the mountain, usually encountering what has become the bane of our existence: rocks. The joy that follows removing a giant rock from your path is as indescribable as the effort required to remove the rock.



During our time at Mission Trails Regional Park Green Seven has grown closer together as a team. We have also developed a plethora of new skills that will help us in our future endeavors. We would like to extend our thanks to the entire staff, especially Rangers Mel Naidas and Levi Dean who have guided us through this project with patience, determination, and exuberance. □

We here at MTRP have thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the work these fine young people have done for the park. Throughout the project, the AmeriCorps volunteers demonstrated positive attitudes, a willingness to learn and a great work ethic. It was a pleasure getting to know them and we wish them luck in the future.
- Levi Dean Park Ranger, City of San Diego





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A Message from Executive Director Jay Wilson

We ended 2014 on a very positive note. Ten Coastal Live Oaks were planted on December 6 in celebration of our annual Arbor Day. The trees were planted in memory of Edward Luranc, Henry Shenkman, Bob Gillett and in honor of Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP). And on December 24, the MTRP Foundation presented nine rangers with i-Pad Air tablets, case and keyboards with funds provided by a \$5,000 grant from REI (Recreation Equipment, Inc.).



We began 2015 on a very positive note as well. Alyson Wright and Jose Gonzalez with REI returned on January 7, and presented the MTRP Foundation with an additional donation of \$20,000 to be used specifically for helping with the restoration of the 95 acres that burned on Kwaay Paay last summer.

The MTRP Visitor and Interpretive Center will celebrate its 20th anniversary in February. The building opened its doors on February 5, 1995. Nearly 1,500,000 visitors have entered the sprawling building and been amazed by all the educational exhibits and displays to be explored. Frequent comments are "This is one of the best visitor centers I have seen" or "this building rivals the best visitor centers in the national parks."

The MTRP Foundation free programs such as concerts, art exhibitions, and monthly Boy Scout Merit Badge classes will continue. Linda Hawley's "Children's Nature Adventures!" offers monthly class for children 4 and up with a different topic each month. There is a charge for her classes. Visit mtrp.org for a complete listing of the concerts, art exhibitions and more information about the "Children's Nature Adventures!" classes.

Save the date of May 16 and join us for our 14th annual Explore Mission Trails Day!

In closing, on behalf of the Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Foundation and its Board of Directors, I thank all the "Friends of Mission Trails" who continue to support the MTRP Foundation with your financial contributions. Through your support, it is always a great day at Mission Trails. ☐



Six of the MTRP Rangers display their new i-Pad Air tablets that were provided by the MTRP Foundation through a \$5,000 grant from REI.

(l to r) Jose Gonzalez (REI),
MTRP Rangers Chris Axtmann,
Araceli Dominguez, Levi Dean,
Rebecca Smart, Andrew Miller,
Heidi Gutknecht, and Alyson
Wright (REI)

MTRP's Arbor Day Celebration Links Passion for Nature with Generosity of Spirit

By Audrey F. Baker

On December 6th, with high spirits and plenty of encouragement, shovels broke ground, dirt puffs rose in the air, and many helping hands participated in MTRP's annual Arbor Day celebration. The enterprise, dedicated to planting trees, combines positive ecological impact with honoring friends and family.

Arbor Day celebrations have been a national tradition since 1882 and stem from an idea promoted by Nebraskan journalist J. Sterling Morton. The first observance was held April 10, 1874. The state-wide response was phenomenal. An estimated one million trees were planted. The popularity of the event swept the country, and still does!

At Mission Trails, we "do" Arbor Day Southern California style. While national festivities generally take place in the spring months, we even buck our own state's March calendar, and hold our observance in December. Here in Southern California winter is prime planting time. Seasonal rains allow fledgling oak trees to establish the above-ground growth and strong roots that prepare them for the sunny days ahead.

Ten donated Coast Live Oak saplings now grace the southwestern edge of East Fortuna Staging Area's main parking lot. Dubbed the "Tree of Life," these new-generation oaks will mature to an impressive 100-foot height. Their majestic canopies will shade and inspire generations of park visitors, and provide food and shelter for resident wildlife.

Our Arbor Day event was sponsored by the MTRP Regional Park Foundation. Its president, Joe Morse, served as master of ceremonies for the celebration, welcoming over 70 exuberant Arbor Day celebrants and thanking them for their generosity that made the day possible. Among our guests were four boys representing San Carlos Boy Scout Troop 950. Their enthusiasm and industry symbolized the team spirit felt by all.

We thank those who sponsored the 2014 trees. Thanks go out to the Luranc Family in memory of Edward Luranc, to the San Diego Natural History Museum Docents as a memorial to Henry Shenkman, to Dianne and Lindsay Hill honoring Mission Trails Regional Park, and to Anne and Don Wemple in tribute to their friend of 50 years, Bob Gillett. It was wonderful to share the day with you, your family and friends. The expression of your life-long appreciation for nature and your commitment to the future are well appreciated. □



Thank you to our many Friends of Mission Trails in 2014

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Arbor Day

Docents of SDNHM in memory of
Henry Shankman
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Edward Luranc
 Lindsay and Dianne Hill
 Wemple Family and Friends in
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Notable Donations

October 1 – December 31, 2014

Patron - \$2,500 - \$4,999

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Jeremy Cowperthwaite
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 Ideal Plumbing, Heating,
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 GR Catering

Trailblazer - \$500-\$999

Arnold and Barbara Friedman
 Edwin and Donna Goodkin
 Lindsay and Dianne Hill
 Diane Nelson and David McLaren
 Outdoor Design Studio
 Mike and Pat Pent
 Arthur and Ruth Savage
 Team Northcutt Realtors

Path Finder – \$100-\$499

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 John and Ann Aydelotte
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 Bill and Mary Langsdorf in honor of
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 Perry and Christine Lieber
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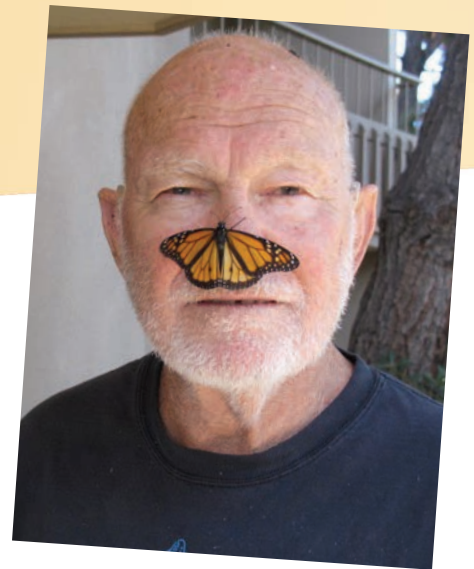
In Loving Memory Of Our Dear Friend Henry Shenkman

By Bill Howell

Henry Shenkman was a bear of a man with hugs and accolades for everyone. What few people know about Henry is his early avocation of glass blowing. He was very talented and made many outstanding professional grade objects out of glass. One day he stopped. Other pursuits awaited.

For over thirty years he worked with troubled youth as a probation officer and was respected by the judges and attorneys of the San Diego legal system as well as the many at risk kids he mentored. When he retired Henry became an outdoor docent with the Canyoneers of the San Diego Natural History Museum, but just leading hikes wasn't enough. He wanted to communicate with more people. That's when he discovered the video camera.

For over twenty years this self described nature nut developed, videoed and produced over 500 videos of wild places all over the world, but mainly focused on the biodiversity of San Diego County. Henry's last project was a video series on the monarch butterfly that included many colorful graphics he constructed with pleasure. Because, as a child, he couldn't stay inside the lines, the magic of the computer allowed him to make his own lines and illustrate in magnificent hues the internal anatomy of the butterfly as well as the caterpillar. Henry says his videos will be his legacy. You can check them out on naturebytesvideo.com. □



Over the years, hundreds of our Trail Guide class students have been fortunate enough to be educated and entertained by Henry with his clever Nature Bytes videos. He was always generous with his time and enthusiastic to share his contagious love of nature with others. Henry's wit and wisdom will truly be missed by all at MTRP, but he will never be forgotten.
-Park Ranger Heidi Gutknecht

Opening Celebration of West Sycamore

By Araceli Dominguez

On the blustery afternoon of December 17, 2014, Mission Trails Regional Park rangers and city officials gathered for a ribbon-cutting ceremony, expanding park land by approximately 1,360 acres. The new region, called West Sycamore, will provide hikers, bikers, and horseback riders seven miles of winding trails through chaparral, oak woodland and coastal sage brush habitats.

The land was set aside in 2001 through an Extraordinary Benefits Agreement, and is now officially open to the public after nearly 14 years. Aside from a parking lot, portable restroom, ranger's office and picnic area, West Sycamore has no other developed areas.

Among the City of San Diego officials present to open the area were Councilmembers Mark Kersey and Scott Sherman, Park and Recreation Department Director Herman Parker and Deputy Director Chris Zirkel, Open Space Division District Manager Steve Haupt, and MTRP Citizens' Advisory Committee Chair Dorothy Leonard. Also in attendance were MTRP Foundation Executive Director Jay Wilson, Scripps Ranch Civic Association President Bob Ilko, and community residents. □

Directions to West Sycamore staging area: http://www.mtrp.org/west_sycamore





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

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.

Friends of Mission Trails Regional Park

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 for additional information.

Name _____

Business _____

Address _____

City _____ State/ZIP _____

Email _____ Phone _____

*You may designate your donation for one or more of the following funds.
Please indicate the amount.*

\$_____ Friends of Mission Trails - General support for all MTRP programs and projects.

_____ MTRP Foundation Endowment Fund - Earnings used for programs and projects

Special Funds

_____ Education Program Fund - Funds used for education programs

_____ Library Fund - Books and supplies for the library

_____ Library Endowment Fund - Earnings used for library books and supplies

_____ Trail Maintenance - Trail maintenance and improvement projects.

_____ Tree and Habitat Maintenance - To help maintain the park's habitat

_____ Lake Murray - Special projects at Lake Murray

\$_____ **Total Donation**

Make check payable to MTRP Foundation and mail to:

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

To donate securely online, visit our web site at mtrp.org

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Maggie Holloway, Editor

Special thanks to photographers David Coosky and Wendy Esterly



Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation

One Father Junipero Serra Trail

San Diego, CA 92119

Address Service Requested



Free Events at the Park!

Offered every month. No reservations required except for concerts. Check website, mtrp.org, for updates and more information.

Guided Walks in the Park

Guided Nature Walks Walks last 90 minutes.

9:30AM from Visitor Center every Wed., Sat. and Sun.

8:30AM from the Campground Day Use lot every 2nd & 4th Sat.

9AM Lake Murray boat docks every 3rd Tues.

Bird Walks 8-10 AM with Birder, Jeanne Raimond.

Feb 21 Visitor Center, Mar 21 Lake Murray and

Apr 18 Old Mission Dam

Wildlife Tracking Walks 8:30-10:30 AM

Feb 7, Mar 7 and Apr 4 front of Visitor Center

Family Discovery Walks 3-4:30 PM

Jan 25, Feb 22 and Mar 22 Visitor Center

Nature Workshops at Visitor Center

Bird Basics 1-2:30 PM Join Birder, Winona Sollock.

Jan 31, Feb 28 and Mar 28 Classroom A

Reading With Ranger Heidi 10-11 AM Library.

Ages 5-7: Feb 7, Mar 7 and Apr 4

Ages 8-10: Feb 21, Mar 21 and Apr 18

Discovery Tables between 10 AM -1 PM Lobby.

Feb 14 - Owl Pellets and Apr 11 - Bird Nests

Astronomy Kumeyaay Campground Day Use Lot

Stars at Mission Trails Sunset until 10 PM. San Diego Astronomy Association. Telescopes available.

Feb 13

Star Parties 5-8 PM with MTRP guide and amateur astronomer, George Varga. Telescope available.

Jan 24, Feb 14, March 7 and Apr 18

Music & Art at Visitor Center

Concerts 3-4 PM in Theatre. Reservations required.

Feb 15 Navy Band Southwest Woodwind Quintet

Feb 22 String Bass & Ensemble

Mar 1 Keyboard Jazz Trio

Mar 15 Sule Greg C. Wilson

Flute Circle 1-3 PM Outdoor Amphitheater.

Jan 11, Feb 8 and Apr 12

Art Shows displayed in the Gallery.

Jan 31 Joan Hansen Reception 1-4 PM

Mar 7 Pastel Society Reception 1-4 PM

Apr 19 San Diego Harp Society 1-4 PM

