



A PUBLICATION OF THE MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK FOUNDATION • VOL 27 • NO 4 • FALL 2016

# Mission Trails Regional Park News

## **Report of Bobcat Release**

Successful rehabilitation allows injured bobcat to return to Mission Trails.

## **Arthropods on the Move for Love in the Park**

Why does the male tarantula cross the road this time of year?

## **"Coast To Cactus" now on sale at MTRP Gift Shop**

San Diego NAT's newest guide to hiking in San Diego includes a full chapter on Mission Trails Regional Park.

## **Upcoming Free Events:**

### **Art in the Park 2016**

Oct 8th thru Nov 4th

### **Halloween Spooktacular**

Saturday, Oct 29,  
6:30-7:30PM

### **Arbor Day 2016**

Saturday, Dec 3, 9AM





## Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation

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**Superior Court Judge, retired**  
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## A Message from Executive Director Jay Wilson

During the summer the Visitor Center enjoyed a facelift on the second floor of the Exhibit Hall with the unveiling of two new exhibits. "Wildlife of Mission Trails", with its two 42 inch touchscreen monitors, depicting spectacular photographs and information about a wide variety of the wildlife of Mission Trails from the elusive mountain lion to the beautiful monarch butterfly. "Embers - The Hidden Threat" includes a video emphasizing the real threat of embers from wildland fires that can travel over 5 miles before being blown into your attic. In addition there is printed information on how to protect your home against flying embers.



There are always people and organizations to thank for their involvement and support for MTRP and/or the MTRP Foundation. The Foundation recently received an Environmental Champions Grants for \$25,000 from SDG&E to provide educational fieldtrips for students and youth groups for this school year. Also a thank you to Jeff Clements, editor of the Mission Times Courier, and La Mesa Courier and Deanna Spehn, editor and publisher of the Tierra Times, for their on-going support of MTRP.

### Coming this Fall!

The MTRP Foundation's 5th Annual "Art in the Park" exhibition will be featured in the MTRP Visitor Center Art Gallery October 8 thru November 4. All of the 48 juried artworks, in a variety of media, are of something wonderful in Mission Trails. Your art purchases will benefit Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation programs.

Our Sixth Annual Halloween Spooktacular will be held on Saturday, October 29, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the MTRP Amphitheater. There may be just the teeniest bit of a shiver from storyteller Harlynn Geisler as she tells her not-too-spooky tales for children ages 3 to 93. The Halloween Spooktacular is free and sponsored by Team Northcutt Realtors. Children are encouraged to come in costume and each child will receive a bag of Halloween treats! Seating is limited to 125 people.

The park's annual Arbor Day will be celebrated on Saturday, December 3, at the Oak Grove on the east side of Father Junipero Serra Trail across from the Visitor Center. For a donation of \$100 you may plant a tree. Check our website under "More News" for more information and the Arbor Day Tree donation form. In order to ensure that the trees are available for all donors to plant, please make your donation by November 21, 2016.

There is always an adventure waiting for you at Mission Trails. ■

## Interested in being a part of the discussions that shape the future of MTRP?

MTRP Task Force and Citizens' Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public and meet every other month at the Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor Center.

**MTRP CAC next meeting:** November 1, 2016, 6:30PM

**MTRP Task Force next meeting:** November 17, 2016, 10AM

For future dates and agendas visit [mtrp.org](http://mtrp.org)

# Trail Guide Training

By MTRP Ranger Chris Axtmann

Recruitment time is here again for our annual Trail Guide Training program. Each year this training is conducted for people interested in learning about the natural and cultural history of Mission Trails and then sharing this knowledge with others on interpretive nature walks throughout the park.

The class curriculum covers a variety of subjects, including ecology, botany, geology, history, birds, mammals, reptiles, insects, Kumeyaay culture and more! This 10-week training involves a three-hour classroom session every Wednesday evening, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., and a three-hour field study session on Saturday mornings, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. During the 11th week, students are evaluated on their interpretive skills during a sample nature walk, take an extensive written final exam on the material learned, and then receive a certificate of completion at a graduation ceremony. Trail Guide graduates are expected to share their new knowledge on at least one guided walk per month, but are welcome, of course, to do more than that after they get their feet wet.



In addition to leading guided nature walks, MTRP Trail Guides also staff Discovery Tables in the Visitor Center; help out with special events, such as our annual "Explore Mission Trails Day" and attend monthly Trail Guide meetings, with special guest speaker presentations. The training program is really a lot of fun, with a great group of people, and, we are always looking for fresh new faces to join the MTRP Trail Guide team.

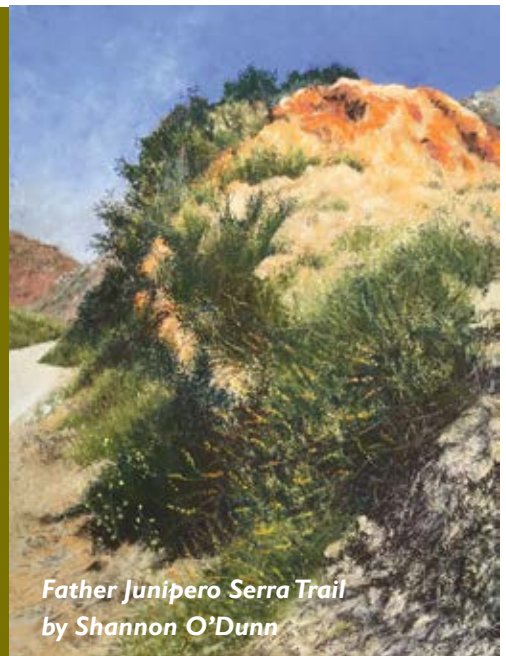
So, if you already know and love Mission Trails Regional Park, then why not learn more about it, so you can share that love with others? No experience is necessary, just a willingness to learn and share. The 2017 Trail Guide Training program is scheduled to begin on Saturday, January 14th, and runs through April 1st. Space is limited in this once-a-year training and the interest list is already filling up! Contact Ranger Chris as soon as possible at [caxtmann@mtrp.org](mailto:caxtmann@mtrp.org) or at 619-668-2746. ■

**Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation's**

## **Art in the Park 2016 5th Annual Juried Fine Art Exhibit**

**On sale Oct 8 thru Nov 4  
are 48 juried original works of art, created in  
a variety of media, inspired by the beauty of  
Mission Trails.**

**Your art purchases benefit  
Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation programs.**



*Father Junipero Serra Trail  
by Shannon O'Dunn*



# Welcome Home!

By MTRP Ranger Heidi Gutknecht

On August 7th, a young female bobcat arrived at Fund for Animals (FFA) with injuries to her head, lower body and left eye. Sadly, she was hit by a car while attempting to cross Santo Road in Tierrasanta and taken unconscious to a local vet by a concerned citizen. More sadly, this petite 13-pound female was pregnant and ended up having a miscarriage overnight, giving birth to a stillborn kitten.

On the bright side, the vet brought her to the right place—The FFA. The non-profit Fund for Animals Wildlife Center was founded by author and animal advocate Cleveland Amory in 1967 and is located in Ramona. This 13-acre facility provides medical and rehabilitative care for ill, injured, or orphaned native predatory species of wild mammals and birds. Once rehabilitated by trained staff

and volunteers, the wildlife are released back into their original territories. In January 2005 a partnership between the FFA and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) was formed and is now the largest and most effective animal protection force in the country. Other Fund for Animals facilities include: the Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch, located in east Texas; Cape Wildlife Center on Cape Cod, Massachusetts; the Duchess Sanctuary (for horses) in Oakland, Oregon; and the Rabbit Sanctuary in Simpsonville, South Carolina, which “provides hope for the hopeless.”

On an even brighter side, the injured bobcat was successfully rehabilitated. On August 19th, she was released back into the wild here at Mission Trails in southern Suycott Wash. This beautiful area of the park provides a lot of natural shelter she can take advantage of and leads downstream to the San Diego River, where she can find a drink. Even though she has lost sight in her left eye, she is strong and able to hunt again. We hope this second chance at life will afford her the opportunity to raise a kitten or two.

A Channel 8 News photographer filmed the release and a short video clip of it was aired on the evening news, but to view a more thorough video segment of the release (put together by the City of San Diego's Communication Department), go to: <https://youtu.be/uvS7U36r2d4>.

Bobcat sightings in the park are far more common than mountain lion sightings. This is because bobcats have a much smaller territorial range than do mountain lions and rely on smaller prey that is more abundant (like rabbits), while the main prey of our local mountain lions is mule deer. People often mistake bobcats for mountain lions, but aside from being felines, the two are very different and easy to tell apart. Mountain lions are much larger (6-9 ft. total length; 70-190 lbs.), are a solid tawny color with light undersides and have a long, black-tipped tail. On the other hand, bobcats are much smaller (2.5-4 ft. total length; 15-29 lbs.), have a spotted coat with light undersides and a short, “bobbed” tail with a black tip and bars on the backside. This stubby tail serves the bobcat well, as it can pursue prey through scrub without getting its tail caught on branches. Those lucky enough to see a bobcat in the park, often catch just a fleeting glimpse from a distance as it is passing through, but the lack of a long tail is the main identifying feature to confirm a sighting. Be sure to stop by the Visitor Center front desk to log any interesting wildlife sightings you may have while visiting the park. Who knows, you might even spot the released bobcat next time you're here! ■



Photo Credit:  
Christine Barton for HSUS







## Spooky, Crawly Arthropods?

**By MTRP Ranger Araceli Dominguez**

With Halloween rapidly approaching, what better way to get in the spirit than to visit Mission Trails Regional Park, the "hostess with the mostess!" The park is literally the best way to get into the spirit of Halloween. Get up close and personal to a naturally made spiral or funnel web that might have a cool spider on it...eating...sucking the juices of its prey...that's already dead...hopefully. Want to see BATS?

We got them too! Just a bit after sunset, be sure to look up and you just might see some cute bats flying over head. Our local bats are insect eaters, while other types of bats eat fruit, pollen, nectar, small animals, fish and even blood! Don't worry though, I've yet to hear of one trying to eat a human!

Still, there's something in the park even cooler than bats. Can you guess what it is? TARANTULAS! Tarantulas live in warm habitats around the world, ranging from rain forest, desert and scrubland. Most tarantulas are found in South America. But wait! Don't book that flight to South America just yet. Instead, donate some of that money you're going to save to the MTRP Foundation and head on over to the park! Our local tarantula (in the genus *Aphonopelma* and family Theraphosidae) can vary from black, to grey, to brown. Although tarantulas are for the most part nocturnal, you might get lucky to see one during the day.

There's no need to be afraid of tarantulas; they are pretty docile and tend to mind their own business. However, if threatened, they will rear up on their back legs and expose their fangs. When seriously threatened, most tarantulas will use their hind legs to flick the barbed "urticating" (irritating) hairs from their abdomen into the eyes of would-be attackers, such as birds, snakes, rodents, other tarantulas and the Pepsis wasp – aka the "tarantula hawk." Don't become another attacker. Always keep in mind that although they pose no serious threat to humans, tarantulas do have venom and can bite.

During the fall mating season, a mature male ditches his burrow in search of true, happy, endless love. Not really. They just want to find a receptive female to mate with. Male tarantulas may walk for a significant amount of time to find a female, but the neat part is that this is when people are most likely to come upon a tarantula. When a male finally finds a female by scent, he approaches the entrance to her burrow and taps (like a true gentleman should) on the thin strands of web that lead into her burrow. If a willing female is drawn to the male, she will exit the burrow and the mating will commence. However, the male doesn't stick around, because if the female is hungry, she may make her baby's daddy her next meal! I like to call this the "two-for-one special!" With that being said, females live longer than males and can live up to 25 years, whereas males only live up to eight years. A good time and place to see a tarantula here is at dusk around the grasslands, so be on the lookout and have a happy Halloween! ■



### Notable Donations

**July 1 - September 30, 2016**

**Sponsor: \$10,000 - \$24,000**

City of San Diego Special Promotional Programs

**Steward: \$5000 - \$9,999**

County of San Diego Community Enhancement Funds  
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**Patron: \$2,500 - \$4,999**

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**Founder: \$1000 - \$2,499**

San Diego Foundation MTRP Endowment Fund  
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John and Mary Todd

**Trailblazer: \$500 - \$999**

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Kiwanis Club of Tierrasanta

**Pathfinder - \$100 - \$499**

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Shannon O'Dunn  
Philip Schey  
Steve Seaborg  
Jeanne Shenkman  
Daryel Stager  
Cissy Walters



# Volunteer Patrol discovers San Diego's "Food of the Gods"

By MTRP Patrol and Trail Guide Daryel Stager

**September 14, 9AM.** Today's MTRP Volunteer Patrol was pretty uneventful, except for the local Red Tail hawks, Ravens and Gnatcatchers foraging in the brush, until a young lady in an orange vest caring for the replanting project located in the southern part of the grasslands.

Curiosity got the best of us so we went to inquire what it was all about. As we talked she explained that all those cages are for protecting San Diego Ambrosia, a federally endangered herb. The contractor works for the FAA because these ambrosia were transplanted from a local air field. She didn't know which one.

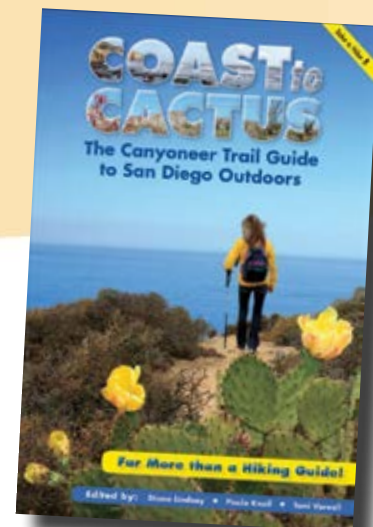


The ambrosia is watered regularly and kept in wire cages for the most part so cute, furry little critters don't eat them and they also needed to cover these "cages" so the sun wouldn't cook them. There are around 40 cages in the grasslands replanting project area, around 15-20 plants in each. I asked if they had a contingency to plant in another location in case of wildfire and they said no, being authorized only for the grassland location.

Future investigation on my own gave more information on this endangered herb. The San Diego Ambrosia is found at elevations below 500 feet in western Riverside and San Diego counties. At MTRP, San Diego ambrosia is found within non-native grassland and sparse coastal sage scrub near the adjacent hillsides of the San Diego River. The San Diego Ambrosia population at MTRP is one of 16 currently extant populations, including seven conserved sites, out of 29 known. The MTRP sites are the only 'major' population of San Diego Ambrosia designated by the Multiple Species Conservation Program for conservation.

This perennial herb is a member of the sunflower family (Asteraceae) and emerges from rhizomes, a modified subterranean stem that is usually found underground. It sends out roots and shoots from its nodes in winter, and flowers from June to September. San Diego Ambrosia is assumed to be wind pollinated based on the reproductive ecology of similar species within the genus.■

**San Diego Ambrosia**

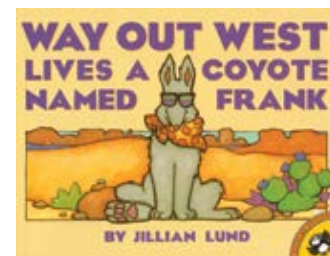


## The Canyoneers' Guide to San Diego County Outdoors

By Patti O'Reilly

This book is far more than a hiking guide to the best of San Diego County Outdoors. It is a trail guide designed to teach appreciation and understanding of San Diego County, considered to be one of the 35 biodiversity hotspots in the world. It is like having a trail guide - a "Virtual Canyoneer" - with you who will introduce habitats and species, as well as cultural and geographical features, found on each exploration.

The proceeds of all sales of this book in our Mission Trails Gift Shop will be shared between the San Diego Natural History Museum and the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation.



### A WELCOME RETURN!

One of our favorite children's books is back at last. WAY OUT WEST LIVES A COYOTE NAMED FRANK by Jillian Lund has returned. Come along to the desert with us and meet the charming Frank as he explores his desert home and has adventures. ■



### Our Funds...

Friends of Mission Trails  
Trail Maintenance  
Tree and Habitat Maintenance  
Education Programs  
Library Books and Supplies  
Lake Murray  
Endowment Funds  
    General  
    Library

### Other ways you may donate....

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Remember MTRP Foundation in  
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\$25 Individual  
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\$50,000 Trustee's Circle  
\$100,000 Director's Circle  
\$1,000,000 Visionary Circle

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

## Become a Friend 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 sponsorships 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 mholloway@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 habitats

\_\_\_\_\_ 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,  
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**To donate securely online, visit our website at [mtrp.org](http://mtrp.org)**

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## Visitor and Interpretive Center

619-668-3281

MTRP Foundation:

619-668-3280

Email: [mtrp@mtrp.org](mailto:mtrp@mtrp.org)

Web Site: [mtrp.org](http://mtrp.org)

## Mission Trails Regional Park News Vol. 27, Number 4, FALL 2016

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*Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Inc., established Jan. 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.*

**Maggie Holloway, Editor**

*Special thanks to photographers David Coosky, Wendy Esterly, Gerry Tietje and Daryl Stager*

## Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation

One Father Junipero Serra Trail  
San Diego, CA 92119

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## Free Events at the Park!

*Offered every month. No reservations. Check website, [mtrp.org](http://mtrp.org), for updates and more information.*

### Guided Walks in the Park

**Guided Nature Walks** 90 minutes long

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

8:30 AM from the Campground Day Use Lot every  
2nd & 4th Saturday

9 AM Lake Murray Walk 'n Talk every 3rd Tues.

**Bird Walks** 8 AM- 10:30AM the 3rd Sat of each month with  
Jeanne Raimond and Millie Basden (various locations)

**Wildlife Tracking Walks** 8:30-10:30 AM

1st Saturday of each month, meet at Visitor Center

**West Sycamore Nature Walks** 8 AM (Scripps Ranch area)  
3rd Sunday of every month

**Family Discovery Walk with Trail Guides** 3 PM

4th Saturday of each month, meet at Visitor Center

### Nature Workshops at Visitor Center

**Discovery Tables** between 10 AM and 1 PM VC Lobby  
Nov 12 - Lichens & Dec 10 - Lizards

### Mountain Biking with a Ranger Series (repeats in Jan)

Oct 1 - Grasslands (Family/Beginners)

Nov 5- West Sycamore (Confident Beginners)

Dec 3- West Fortuna (Intermediate Riders)

### Astronomy

Kumeyaay Campground Day Use Lot

**Stars at Mission Trails** San Diego Astronomy Association.

Telescopes available. 2nd Friday of each month  
Oct - May, 7PM - 10 PM.

**Star Party** with MTRP Trail Guide and resident amateur  
astronomer, George Varga. Telescope available.

Oct 22 @ 6 PM - 9 PM and Nov 19 @ 5 PM - 8PM

West Sycamore Staging Area (Scripps Ranch area)

**Stars at Mission Trails** Oct 28, 7 PM - 10 PM

### Special Events at Visitor Center

**Halloween Spooktacular** Oct 29 Amphitheater 6:30PM

**Concerts** 3-4 PM in Theatre. Seating is limited (93).

Oct 30 - Fred Benedetti, guitarist

Nov 6 - San Diego Clarinet Quintet

Nov 20 - Peter Puppington, guitarist

Dec 4 - Santee Community Chorus

Dec 18 - Many Strings

**Flute Circle** 1-3 PM Outdoor Amphitheater  
2nd Saturday of each month

**Art Shows** displayed in the Gallery. Reception 1-4 PM

Oct 9 - Art in the Park

Nov 12 - Four Person Photography

Dec 10 - Local Schools

**Arbor Day Planting** Dec 3, Oak Grove Loop, 9 AM