



# Mission Trails Regional Park News

A PUBLICATION OF THE MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK FOUNDATION Vol. 30, Number 3, Fall 2019



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## MISSION OF THE MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

In partnership with the City of San Diego, preserve and protect the natural environment of Mission Trails Regional Park and provide and promote educational and recreational opportunities.

### MESSAGE FROM Jennifer Morrissey, Executive Director, MTRP Foundation



Some months back, a new Education Committee was created at Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP), comprised of City rangers and MTRP Foundation Board members and staff. We discussed our joint partnership on field trips (which bring more than 11,000 students to the park annually) and ideas to further engage with and provide educational opportunities to the community. Three of the upcoming events featured in the newsletter are the result of this new committee's work. The new programs include a presentation by California native plant expert Mike Evans about using plants commonly found at MTRP to create habitat in our home gardens; a family program with a Native storyteller about the park's nocturnal animals; and a lecture by Wendy Esterly about 20 birds seen at Mission Trails, taking place in conjunction with this fall's debut of a new exhibit on the park's Nest Box Program.

During Thanksgiving week, the MTRP Foundation will reintroduce a Day Camp program, for children in second through sixth grades. Developed by the MTRP Foundation's Lead Educator Amber Goslee, the camp will allow children to have an in-depth experience of the park and learn about several aspects of Mission Trails including its plants and animals, the various habitats within the park, the Kumeyaay, and more. Information about the three-day camp can be found through our website. We are grateful to MTRP Foundation Board member Ruth Gautereaux and her family for creating the David Gautereaux Memorial Educational Fund which is helping to develop this "reboot" of the Foundation's Day Camp.

As a former Girl Scout, I'm excited that the MTRP Foundation will soon offer two Girl Scout badge workshops at the park. Brownies will be able to work with the Foundation's educators to receive the Eco-friends badge, and Juniors can earn the Junior Naturalists badge. This program comes at a time when we have seen young people from around the world step forward to advocate for the environment. Our badge workshops will show the girls how we can enjoy wild spaces like Mission Trails while protecting the land and the creatures within it. We hope that adults, too, will continue their learning with us this fall, as we work to steward this truly special place.

**This fall we will offer a new Day Camp and two Girl Scout badge workshops.**

Visitor and Interpretive Center (619) 668-3281

MTRP Foundation (619) 668-3280

Email [mtrp@mtrp.org](mailto:mtrp@mtrp.org) Web Site [www.mtrp.org](http://www.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.

IMAGE CREDITS Cover: Angie Ollman; Page 2: Angie Ollman; Page 3: Jennifer Morrissey, Angie Ollman; Pages 4-5: Angie Ollman, Wendy Esterly; Pages 6-7: Angie Ollman; Page 8: Wendy Esterly; Page 9: Don Endicott, Pea Hicks; Page 10: Gerry Tietje, courtesy of MTRP and the Reed family; Page 12: Jennifer Morrissey, Julie Gealta.

## ON THE COVER

Middle school students exploring around Kumeyaay Lake on one of the MTRP Foundation's overnight campouts, generously sponsored by SDG&E.



# Mission Trails'

Focus of New Exhibit and Film

# Geology

**OVER THE SUMMER, A NEW GEOLOGY EXHIBIT WAS INSTALLED ON THE VISITOR CENTER TERRACE.** The three interpretive panels provide an overview of the geologic events that shaped Mission Trails, based on the findings of geologist and SDSU professor emeritus Pat Abbott, PhD, author of the *Geology of Mission Trails*.

The new exhibit is a collaboration between Dr. Abbott, MTRP rangers, and the MTRP Foundation; it was generously funded by Republic Services, Superior Ready Mix, and the County of San Diego. The educational panels will be enjoyed by the more than 80,000 annual guests to the Visitor Center.

Beginning in November, a newly produced short film about the geology of Mission Trails will be available for viewing at the Visitor Center. Created with Dr. Abbott and the MTRP Foundation by the Emmy-winning De Facto Fiction Films, the piece will provide an in-depth examination of the park's geology and feature stunning, high-definition footage of the park. Thanks to a generous grant from Las Patronas, the film will be shown using a new, state-of-the-art projector that provides bright, sharp imagery to beautifully showcase Mission Trails.



# Bring Mission Trails Home: CREATING A BACKYARD HABITAT



## LECTURE: Creating a Backyard Habitat

**Mike Evans**  
Tree of Life Nursery

**Thursday, Oct. 24, 7PM**

MTRP Visitor and  
Interpretive Center

Tickets: \$10

For more information and  
to register, visit [mtrp.org](http://mtrp.org).

Home gardens can be a representation of nature, designed, built, and cared for in context. A well-planned California natural garden will always pass the test of time and will continually provide valuable habitat for birds, beneficial pollinators, and other wildlife species.

On Thursday, October 24, Mike Evans of Tree of Life Nursery (TOLN) will discuss the important role that native California plants can play in home landscapes and share ideas on how to bring the beauty of Mission Trails to your own backyard. Emphasis will be on how to design a natural garden that incorporates some of the plants found at the park.

Mike Evans is founder and president of Tree of Life Nursery in San Juan Capistrano, producing and selling California native plants for over 40 years. TOLN is the largest native plant supplier in California and promotes a style of authentic horticulture, specifically the concept of appropriate landscaping with native California plants.

As a special bonus, presentation attendees will be invited to attend a hands-on propagation workshop with MTRP volunteer Terry Gaughen at 9AM on Saturday, November 2.



## VISITOR CENTER GIFT SHOP GETTING A “GOLD LEAF” TOUCH



Join us at the Holiday  
Marketplace at the  
MTRP Visitor Center

**SUNDAY, NOV. 17**  
**10AM-4PM**

**THE MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK (MTRP) VISITOR CENTER GIFT SHOP** is in the midst of a mini-transformation. Sonya Kemp, founder of Gold Leaf in South Park, a well-loved shop featuring “curated goods for hearth and home” is bringing unique books, toys, cards, and gifts to MTRP, inspired by the beauty of the park and the excitement of outdoor life. Among the newly added book titles are *The Lost Art of Reading Nature’s Signs* and, for children, toys for exploring nature by HABA and Kikkerland.

We recently introduced two new Mission Trails T-shirts to the shop, one of which features California poppies, inspired by our “superbloom” earlier this year.

Mark your calendar for our Holiday Marketplace on Sunday, November 17. Several local artisans will offer unique holiday gifts, and a percentage of sales will benefit the park.

All sales in the gift shop support Mission Trails.





# Birds Along the Trail

AT MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK



**REGIONALLY, THE NAME WENDY ESTERLY IS SYNONYMOUS WITH BIRDS AND BIRDING.**

A longtime volunteer at both Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) and the San Diego Natural History Museum, Wendy is an avid photographer whose stunning images of birds and other wildlife have been used in publications and exhibits. At both organizations, she is a volunteer trail guide and a member of the training team for future trail guides. At Mission Trails, she is the MTRP Nest Box Project's co-coordinator and also monitors nest boxes during nesting season. She has served on the Wonderful Wildlife of Mission Trails exhibit committee, and on the Nest Box Project exhibit at the MTRP Visitor Center, set to open this fall. Wendy is also the author of the recently published *Coloring Southern California Birds* by Sunbelt Publications.



**LECTURE:**  
**Birds Along the Trail**

**Wendy Esterly**  
MTRP Trail Guide and  
Nest Box Volunteer

**Thursday, Nov. 14, 7PM**  
**MTRP Visitor and Interpretive  
Center**

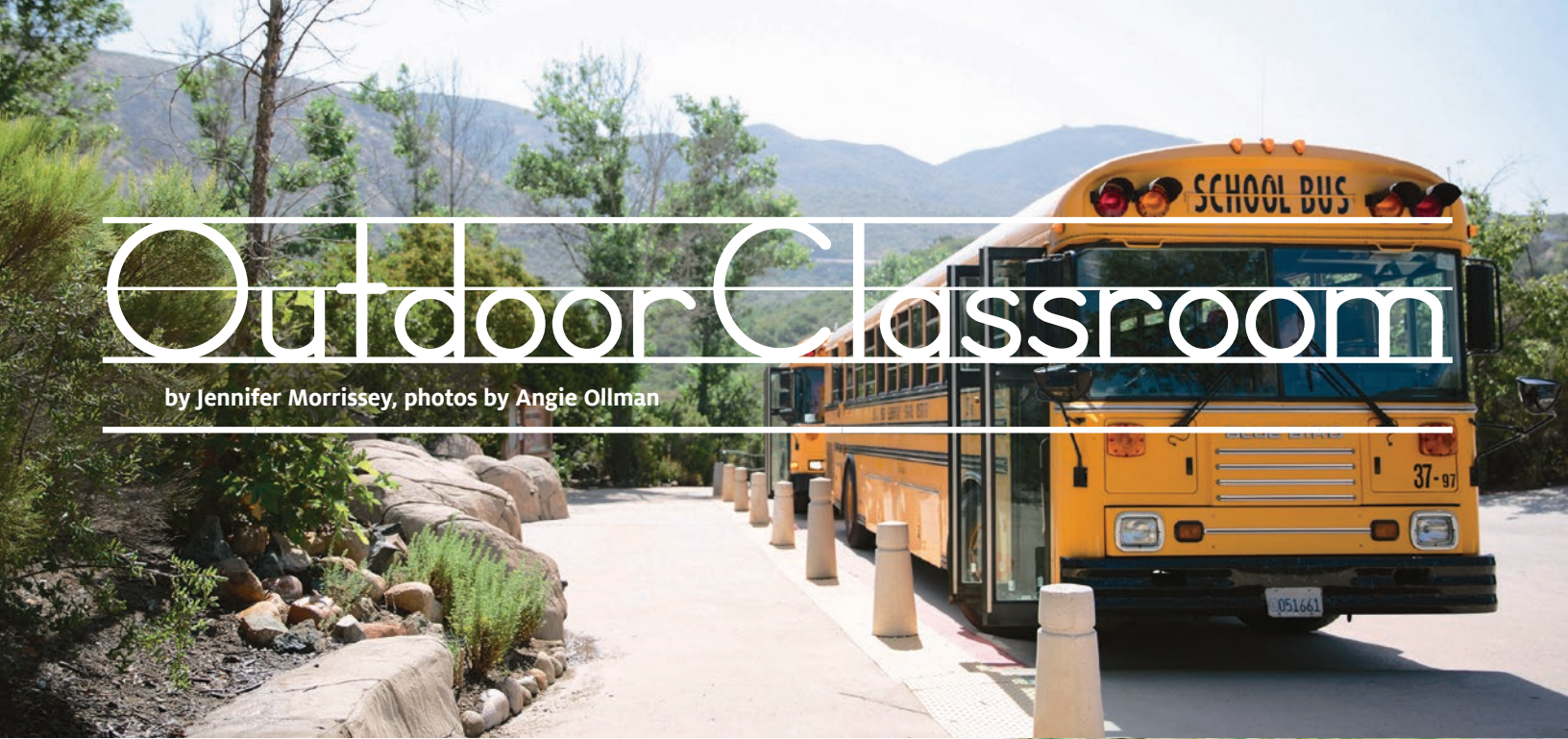
**Tickets: \$10**

On November 14, Wendy Esterly will share photos of 20 birds commonly seen at Mission Trails Regional Park. Attendees will learn where to find the birds, the time of year they can be seen, hear their call or song, and find out interesting facts about the birds at the park. This presentation is suitable for all ages, and doors open at 6:30PM for a book signing of *Coloring Southern California Birds*. Learn more and register at [www.mtrp.org](http://www.mtrp.org).

Photos by Wendy Esterly

# Outdoor Classroom

by Jennifer Morrissey, photos by Angie Ollman



**WE KNOW THEY'VE ARRIVED WHEN WE HEAR BUSTLING, CHATTER, AND THE SOUND OF MANY LITTLE VOICES.** They are the schoolchildren who visit the Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Visitor Center on field trips; between the Ranger-led and Foundation-led field trip programs, more than 11,000 children came to the park last school year. It was quiet at the Visitor Center during summer due to schools' summer breaks, but we're pleased that the students' wide-eyed sense of wonder has returned to MTRP.

Field trips at Mission Trails are led primarily by Park Rangers and MTRP Foundation staff. However, the park's volunteer Trail Guides lend their support to school groups as well. Several years ago, the MTRP Foundation started a field trip program when community demand for them became more than the rangers were able to accommodate. The two programs are similar and share resources; both host many third-grade classes, visiting the park in conjunction with that grade's curriculum on Native Americans and the Kumeyaay. Park Rangers and Foundation staff continually build on their knowledge, and Ranger Chris Axtmann has particular





interest in Kumeyaay culture. Earlier this year, following a program at the Barona Museum, she tested recipes derived from acorns, going through the arduous process from acorn to edible food. Beginning this school year, Ranger Axtmann will step down as Education Coordinator for the Rangers' education program, passing the torch to Ranger Julie Aeilts.

Since 2016, the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, in cooperation with the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department and San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), has organized overnight campouts at the park's Kumeyaay Lake Campground. The program was initiated when SDUSD put a hold on its traditional sixth grade camp program due to budget cuts. Since its inception, several hundred sixth grade students have benefited from the MTRP Foundation's overnight program, funded by a grant from San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). The Foundation provides tents—generously donated by locally based outfitter Lightspeed Outdoor—sleeping mats, campsite fees, bus transportation, and onsite staffing. The MTRP Foundation's Lead Educator, Amber Goslee, works with visiting teachers to customize their curriculum; the campouts typically include guided hikes, a nighttime "star party," and a presentation by a Native-American storyteller, Cathleen Chilcote Wallace, who is sometimes accompanied by her son, a native flute musician.

The Foundation's overnight program is enjoyed by students and greatly valued by teachers, one of whom wrote in a post-campout survey, "The trip was amazing! Our guide was very informative, talking about the history of the space and sharing her knowledge of geology and anthropology. The facilities were well maintained and beautiful." The MTRP Foundation thanks SDG&E and donors to the MTRP Foundation for making this unique experience—and classroom field trips—available to local youth, our next generation of environmental stewards.

Near left: MTRP Ranger Chris Axtmann on the Grinding Rocks trail with students. Far left: MTRP Foundation Lead Educator Amber Goslee with middle school overnight campers.



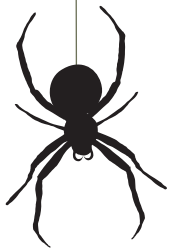
# Nighttime Creatures at Mission Trails

By Nora Bodrian, MTRP Trail Guide Class of 2018

**As cooler weather settles in and the nights become longer, you may encounter more nocturnal animals at Mission Trails and in your everyday environment.**

Animals perceive the changes in seasons by following the environmental cues of shortened days and longer nights, and adjust their activity patterns accordingly.

Why are some animals nocturnal? It is an evolutionary phenomenon where prey animals come out at night when their predators might not find them. Consequently, the predators have adapted hunting skills, and some might have enhanced their sight, speed, or senses of heat and smell. As bats produce sounds to locate prey through echolocation, tarantulas have specialized hairs with sensory receptors to “see” in the dark. Animals that are primarily out at night at Mission Trails Regional Park include bats, owls, woodrats, mice, skunks, opossums, raccoons, and grey foxes, as well as scorpions and tarantulas. Some animals are crepuscular, active at dawn and dusk; these animals include bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, and cottontail rabbits.



**Since this is the season, let's consider bats, owls, and spiders.**

According to author, regional bat expert, and MTRP Trail Guide Don Endicott, there are 10 species of bats at Mission Trails Regional Park, and 22 species in San Diego County. The most common ones residing in the park are Canyon bats, Yuma myotis, Big brown bats, Mexican free-tailed bats, and Pocketed free-tailed bats.

Living in diverse habitats throughout most of the world, bats are impressive mammals that can be nectar eaters (nectavores), fruit eaters (fructivores), or insect eaters. Nectarivorous bats are responsible for pollinating many types of plants and “fruit bats” disperse seeds, greatly assisting reforestation in tropical regions. However, most of the over 1,300 species of bats, and all 10 species present in MTRP are insectivores. During their nightly forays, they consume moths, gnats, mosquitos, and other flying insects as well as those on the ground including grasshoppers, centipedes, and scorpions. One species that lives just north of San Diego County, the Little brown bat, has been documented eating 1,000 mosquitos in a single hour– that’s a lot of mosquitos! Mexican free-tailed bats are generalists who typically feed on moths, consuming hundreds of tons of invasive and crop-damaging species throughout the Southwestern U.S. Bats are not blind but they primarily use echolocation to navigate and hunt during the night by emitting a call that echoes back to inform them where they are and the location and size of prey. Our bats in Mission Trails will not fly into your hair, nor drink your blood. Like other wild animals, though, bats can contract rabies. Although the incidence of rabies in our local bats is extremely low, for your safety it is important to not handle any injured or sick bat you might encounter on the ground. Please contact one of Mission Trails’ rangers if you discover one.



# MISSION TRAILS' Creatures of the Night

**Sunday, October 27**

MTRP Visitor Center  
Amphitheater

**3:30-4:30PM**

**Crafts with Ranger Julie**

**4:30PM**

**Native-American Storyteller**

*Free, with online registration  
required*

**Come at 3PM to join the MTRP  
Trail Guides on their monthly  
Family Discovery Walk**

Join the MTRP community for a special family program that celebrates the nocturnal (and crepuscular) animals of Mission Trails Regional Park. This free program will include craft making with Ranger Julie and Native-American tales about nighttime animals. Storyteller Cathleen Chilcote Wallace (Luiseño) will be joined by her son, native flute musician Brandon Chilcote Wallace (Luiseño). They are members of the San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians.

**To register and learn more,  
visit [www.mtrp.org/programs](http://www.mtrp.org/programs).**



The California myotis bat is similar in appearance to Yuma myotis, a commonly sighted species around Old Mission Dam and Kumeyaay Lake.

At night, one might catch a glimpse of such silent flying predators as Barn Owls or Great-Horned Owls. Owls can take down large raptors as well as small rodents, frogs, and lizards. They can swallow small prey whole, then spit up pellets of undigested feathers, skin, and bones. By dissecting pellets, one can see what kinds of animals live in an area. The owl's razor-sharp talons are for piercing and cutting; they would not sit on your shoulder like Harry Potter's "Hedwig." Owls' large eyes don't move in their sockets, but the whole head can swivel 180 degrees. It is very difficult to see an owl as they sit very still and their feathers are patterned like tree bark and leaves. One might see them flying over Mission Trails' grasslands.

Tarantulas are the largest of all spiders, with distinctive hairy legs and bodies. The hair, or setae, is their primary sensory organ to smell and hear. The urticating hairs on the abdomen are defense mechanisms, which they flick out at attackers. Tarantulas do not spin webs, but live in burrows or under rocks which they line with their spun silk. Tarantulas primarily eat insects, and their predators include mammals, birds, reptiles, and the infamous tarantula hawk wasp.

Apart from the spooky symbolism of Halloween, bats, owls, and spiders make important environmental contributions beyond our imaginations. The next time you're at the Visitor Center, make sure to go out onto the terrace to see the interpretive panel about bats at MTRP, and the bat boxes installed on the Center's roof.



This baby Pocketed free-tailed bat was rescued at Grossmont College and successfully returned to the wild.





# In Memoriam



Linda Kramer with her husband Fred at the MTRP Visitor Center.

## Linda Kramer

The Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) community is deeply saddened by the passing of Linda Kramer, on August 10, 2019. A longtime MTRP volunteer, Linda served as secretary of the park's Trail Guide program since its inception in 1995; her husband, Fred Kramer, has been the group's president since April 2000. Linda and Fred could be seen at the park several times a week, often on Father Junipero Serra Trail. Linda would routinely pick up trash along the way, leaving no cigarette butt or wrapper in her path.

Linda Lorraine Sawyer was born in Quincy, Massachusetts, and her family later relocated to Glendale, California. There, she met the love of her life, Fred Kramer. They married in 1968 and shared the next 51 years as best friends, proud parents of a son (Greg) and daughter (Amy), and grandparents of two granddaughters (Meredith and Makenna).

Before volunteering at Mission Trails, Linda was very active in her children's youth sports programs, coaching soccer and Bobby Sox. She worked in the offices of Dailard and Penn Elementary Schools, and began volunteering at the MTRP Visitor Center front desk when the facility opened in 1995. She was also a graduate of the first Trail Guide training that year, and went on to lead more than 140 walks in the park, including many for school groups, which she thoroughly enjoyed.

In 2005, Linda received a special award for her dedicated volunteer service at Mission Trails, and in 2009, she received the Volunteer of the Year award.

Linda Kramer will be remembered fondly and sorely missed. One of Linda's favorite things to see at Mission Trails was the beautiful wildflower, canchalagua. The flower's springtime bloom will forever remind us of Linda and her kind spirit.

## Nancy Reed

Nancy Reed had a rich and adventurous life. Born and raised in Ohio, Nancy earned her Master of Education degree at the University of Cincinnati, and taught overseas twice, in Germany, then later in France with her husband, Carroll Reed. The couple moved from France to La Mesa after Carroll accepted a position as the founding Music Director at Grossmont Community College. In La Mesa, Nancy and Carroll raised their two children, Marcia and Randy. Nancy Reed passed away at her home on September 8, 2019.

Nancy had a passion for swimming and swam in the La Jolla Rough Water Swim for many years, winning her age group several times. She taught infant swim and aquatic therapy at Grossmont Hospital, worked as a lifeguard at the La Mesa Municipal pool, and gave swim lessons to many children in La Mesa. She was a proud member of the Heartland Master Swim Club well into her 80s.

Shortly after her husband Carroll's passing in 1996, Nancy moved to Santee where she enjoyed a view of Mission Trails Regional Park. Nancy volunteered in the MTRP Visitor Center for nearly 10 years, and during that time she met hundreds if not thousands of nature enthusiasts like her, helping them decide which trails to hike, and educating them about the park's other offerings.

Nancy's smile, optimism, and friendly demeanor will be greatly missed by the MTRP community. A Celebration of Life for Nancy Reed will be held in November; call the Visitor Center for details.



# DONOR HIGHLIGHTS

We are grateful to the following community members and organizations that made gifts to support Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) between July 1, 2018 and September 15, 2019. If you see any inaccuracies, please contact the MTRP Foundation at 619-668-3280 or email mtrp@mtrp.org.


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Gayle and Ted Wolken  
Liza Zinola

## IN MEMORY OF LINDA KRAMER

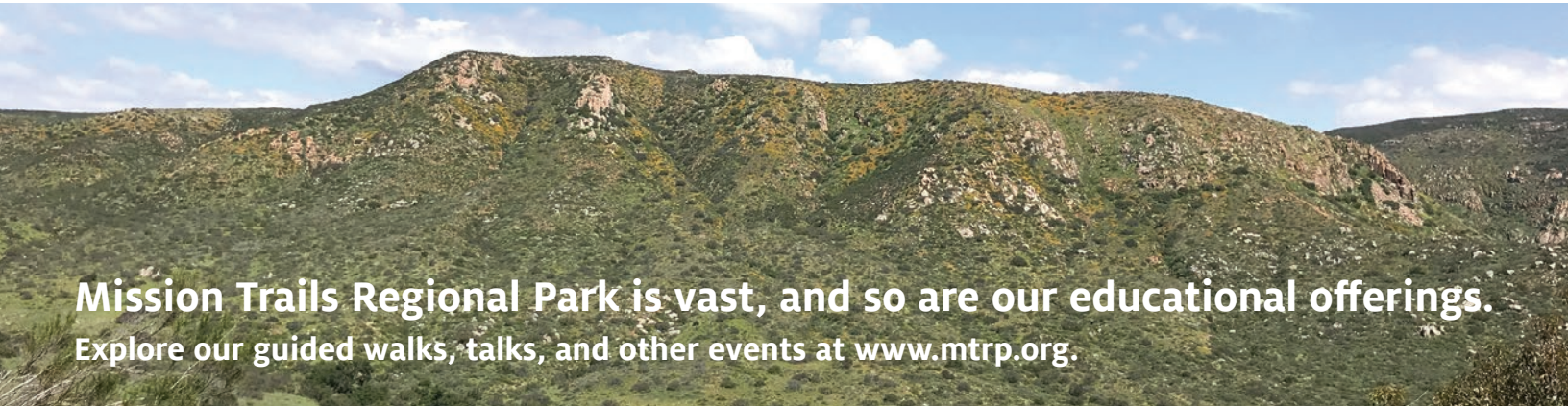
Larry and Patricia Dale  
Elizabeth and Tom Fitzgerald  
Susan and John Fratamico  
Linda Hassakis  
Maggie and John Holloway  
Wendy and Terry Esterly  
Keiko and Gary Jensen  
M. Dan McKirnan  
Laverne and Everett Neuman  
Penelope O'Brien  
Jody and David Rowley  
Gerald Tietje  
Nancy and George Varga  
Mary Wagner



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Mission Trails Regional Park is vast, and so are our educational offerings. Explore our guided walks, talks, and other events at [www.mtrp.org](http://www.mtrp.org).

## Annual Photo Contest Winners Announced



Each year, the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation organizes an Amateur Photography Contest to encourage photographers of all ages to capture their experiences of MTRP and share their unique perspectives with the community.

The winners of the 27th annual Mission Trails Regional Park Amateur Photo Contest were announced in June. This year's Best of Show was awarded to Julie Gealta for her work, *Pampas Grass in the Sun*.

A record-setting 223 entries were submitted this year, and the photos were displayed at the Visitor Center from May 11 through June 21. MTRP Foundation Board Member Betty Ogilvie and her husband, Mike, took the lead in making this year's event a success; from collecting the applications and photos to installing the works and working with the contest jurors. Thank you, Betty and Mike!

### BEST OF SHOW

*Pampas Grass in the Sun*  
 by Julie Gealta (pictured at left)

### PEOPLE'S CHOICE

*Upon a Valley* by Tahlia Schilf

### CATEGORY: CHILDREN

#### FIRST PLACE

*Scaly Lizard* by Enzo Moscola

### CATEGORY: TEENS

#### FIRST PLACE, ANIMALS

*Snake Snack* by Ethan Garrett

#### FIRST PLACE, LANDSCAPES

*Sunset in Lake Murray*  
 by Jennifer Carmona

#### FIRST PLACE, PLANTS

*Bee Snack* by Ethan Garrett

### CATEGORY: ADULTS

#### FIRST PLACE, ANIMALS

*Portrait of a Roadrunner* by Cheryl Old

#### FIRST PLACE, LANDSCAPES

*April Showers* by Mark K. James

#### FIRST PLACE, PLANTS

*Barking Fungus* by Skip Reichenberg

#### FIRST PLACE, PEOPLE

*Self Portrait* by William Combs