

REDESIGNING THE VISITOR CENTER

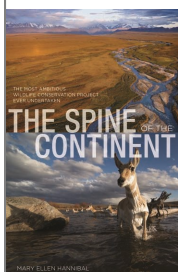
Today, Sunday, the 12th of June, when I ambled into the V.C. to see what changes had been made, beautiful “hardwood” floors hit me with their “forest” aura. Then I saw that all the strange white displays were gone, but that the animals: birds, snakes, fawn, bobcat, etc. were still there, as were the labeled plant specimens and the skulls, cones, artichokes, etc. The painting of the museum walls was yet to be done, & lights to be hung, so it’s quite stimulating to try to imagine how our “new” center will impact the public. Thank you **Ranger Matt DelCarlo, Katherine Wright** & all who have worked on a better vision with which to display our Park’s riches. (Photo of **Ranger Escoto** at work by **Matt DelCarlo**)



ANCIENT INDIAN CAVES of BAJA, ZONOSSES, LIVE BATS

Have no fear, despite our “recess”, we have a nice lineup of programs for you starting with **Dr. Esposito’s** Aug. program. AND on September 24th at 5pm, **Jon Harman** will present the **Baja Indian Cave Art** he has photographed and studied during expeditions to the “other California”. On October 15, at 4pm, **Dr. Shannon Bennett** from the Cal Academy of Sciences will present “**Zoonoses**”, the diseases that skip from animals to humans. Then on November 19th at 3pm, **Corky Quirk** will

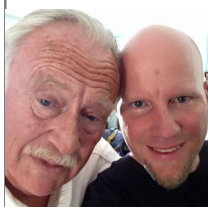
give a return engagement of “**Bats**”, including live bats. This latter program is recommended for older children as well as adults. Next year we will present a lively new scientist and her studies of the current **amphibian disease** crisis, a program on the **ecology of fire in the drought-dependent West**, **one on the spring birds of SPVP** by our talented and dynamic **Jim Steele**, and “in the works”, a program by the famous author of the book on creating a wildlife corridor to save animals in North America (see inset) **Mary Ellen Hannibal**.



NEWS BRIEFS AND NOTICES

Star gazing, BBQ, and a Campout; all in one, are tentatively scheduled for new moon, **Sat. October 1**. Due to the efforts of **Jim Steele**, rangers gave volunteers permission for this campout in SPVP! Save the date.

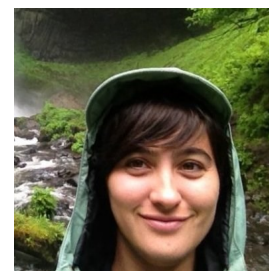
New ranger II, Matthew Tolmasoff, former Emergency Med Tech, just joined **Ranger DelCarlo’s** corps for District IV, and of course, our Park. He hails from Coyote Point. Here he is with Dad on Father’s Day. (from **Facebook** photo)



LAUREN ESPOSITO PRESENTS SCORPIONS IN AUGUST

Scorpions are “on the menu” for August 20th, and who better to bring this venomous group of Arachnids to us than a dynamic researcher of their toxins from the California Academy of Sciences, **Dr. Lauren Esposito**.

This remarkable woman became hooked on these stingers while working with African scorpions during her undergraduate field studies from New York University, maybe because this ancient group of Arthropods, older than cockroaches, has a dizzying assortment of toxins in its 2000 species; in one species there can be 200 toxins in one individual!



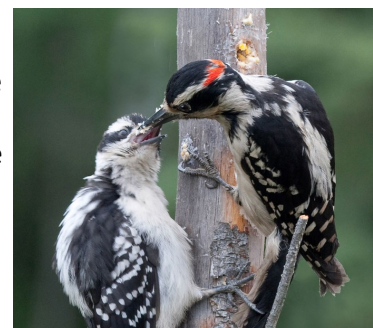
But the real ringer is that an assortment of these world-wide scorpion venoms has been found to be of use in treating glioma brain cancer, or diabetes, or autoimmune disease. (to your left is a photo of our exclusive “forest scorpion”, *Uroctonus mordax*.)



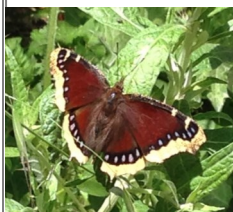
Thus the extra impetus for Dr. Esposito to be concerned about protecting their biodiversity. One of the regions she is now focused on is the Caribbean, where she has helped establish a field study and ecotourism station on coincidentally, “Scorpion Bay”—part of a new network of such stations sponsored by her co-founded nascent organization, “Islands and Seas”. The hope is to enlist the active cooperation of the people with the scientists in preserving and studying the enormous biodiversity of this area.

ON THE TRAIL

Love was still in the air in April, when **Ray Trabucco** saw the actual mating of a **Downy Woodpecker couple**, but this was obviously no casual fling; in May the female was definitely situated on her nest in the excavated cavity of the dying tree off Trout Farm Trail. And later in May please tell your editor if you saw this! (**Leo Wehrsted** photo of feeding of young)



Laurie Nikitas sighted this **Mourning Cloak butterfly, *Nymphalis antiopa***, on the afternoon of June 10th, and she related this: “Saw this where I’ve seen them before—near the bridge out at the end of Weiler Ranch Rd. It was trying to sit on the ground before this, but the gusty wind sent leaves hurtling toward it like a missile, even hitting it once, so it landed here and posed.” She also reported seeing a **bobcat**, who upon seeing Laurie, jumped off the pathway on the Hazelnut Trail—May 27, at 1pm; it’s quite a different thing when you meet one up there alone: magical, I would say. (continued on p. 4)



HOW RANGER MATT DELCARLO LAUNCHED HIMSELF INTO OUR WILD PARKS AND FLUORISHED

I was born and raised in Belmont, CA. At a very young age, I would help my grandparents and parents with the garden and tend to the **chickens** and **rabbits**. My love of the outdoors started there.

When I was young I would visit my grandparents in Half Moon Bay & would look at the fields of produce off of Highway 92 & always told my parents I wanted to own a farm or



ranch. I would often go fishing and hunting with my dad and still do. As for fishing I enjoy both surf and freshwater fishing in lakes. I hunt **deer, wild boar, & upland game & birds.** (Here's a photo of the most dangerous

and habitat-destructive of the animals Matt hunts: the **wild boar.**) We would routinely go to Memorial Park and Huddart Park on day trips, but when I was able to drive I explored more parks on my own.

In my late teens (1991) I started working as a Park Aide with San Mateo County. By my second summer I knew this is what I wanted to do as a career. I had studied and had lots of on-the-job experience. During this time I had the opportunity to work in all county parks. I was hired full time in 1998 and was assigned to Junipero Serra Park. After about a year I transferred to San Bruno Mountain Park & within another year transferred to Huddart Park.

In 2000, I was promoted to Park Ranger III and assigned to



the Pescadero Creek Complex, which included Memorial Park, Sam McDonald Park & Heritage Grove. One of my most memorable events happened there, near Pescadero Creek: I remember transporting a child from Jones Gulch on a Stokes basket with Cal Fire. He had

fallen and broken his leg. It was in the middle of winter in a downpour and a two mile hike round trip, and of course I responded so quickly I had forgotten my rain gear and was soaked!

In 2003, with the restructuring of parks, all of the coastside units were managed by the Memorial Park supervising ranger, **John Kenney**, & I was shifted as the Park Ranger III for San Pedro Valley to work with **Ranger Doug Heisinger** and **Jonel Ishida**. When Kenney retired in 2005, Director **Dave Holland** promoted me to Park Ranger IV, in which position I managed all coast parks at that time, and later the newly acquired Quarry Park, Pillar Point Bluffs and Mirada properties in 2007.

In 2010, I was transferred to Coyote Point Recreation Area and the coast district was broken into a Mid Coast and South Coast districts. Then in 2015, I was reassigned to the San Pedro Valley Park, District IV. This District includes

Fitzgerald Marine Res., Pillar Point Bluffs & Marsh, Mirada Surf East and West, Quarry Park and the soon to be included Pedro Pt Headlands. So you can see that I have been with the S.M. Co. Department of Parks for 25 yrs, from 1991 to 2016.

I really like the maintenance side of our job: being able to see something from start to completion. I love to see the good times people have at the parks as a result of my work: using a bench or picnic site that I have just installed or walking down a trail we cleared of downed trees—seeing people enjoy themselves, even though they don't realize just how much work goes into some of the projects we do. Then there is all the behind scenes stuff people do not realize is necessary for a park to run smoothly: like budgets and permits & other hoops we have to jump through to get things done. In the photo above you can see me splitting rails for a fence at Memorial Park.



And don't forget when you see our hard working rangers: People get connected to the park they frequent, not realizing that there are several other parks we need to maintain to the same degree, & they all require attention on a daily basis. I have been fortunate to have rangers around me who have the same drive & willingness to make parks safe & enjoyable for our patrons. [Matt has been an extremely involved and dynamic ranger for SPVP. Thank you, Matt, from all the Friends of the Park!]



HARDEST WORKERS WEST OF THE ROCKIES

By Joseph Piro

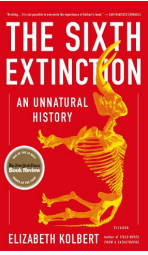
We had a pretty small turn-out for our June 11th Trail Day -- just **Istvan Puski**, my brother **Erik** and I -- but we got a nice amount of work done. First, we trimmed and tidied things along the path that meanders thru the Sun Garden in front of the Visitor's Center. Then, we hiked up the Brooks Falls Trail to the bench overlooking the falls, raking leftovers from recent string-cutter brushing work the Rangers have done and cutting some **manzanita** branches and stacking them to help block a shortcut path folks have been taking at a switchback up there. Then, on our way back, we took the loop down onto the Trout Farm Trail and worked at the small bridge by the old foundation, raking off lots of **eucalyptus leaves & pods**. By the time we arrived back down at the V.C. just before 12, things were quite busy with 2 events going on -- a wedding and a birthday party -- certainly a wonderful, sunny day for everything in the Park!



A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE by Jim Mackey

July/Aug. 2016

"The Sixth Extinction". I cited a book with this title, by **Elizabeth Kolbert**, in the last edition of our Newsletter. She described how "one weedy species" (us) is bringing about the extinction of others, especially frogs and toads, and ultimately, perhaps, ourselves. Ms. Kolbert visited conservation biologists at their research sites and often accompanied them into the field, including coral reefs, tropical rain forests and bat caves. Her delight in being introduced to a surprising diversity of living things reflects from her writing.



Prologue. Ms. Kolbert's story "starts with the emergence of a new species ... The new species does not yet have a name - nothing does - but it has the capacity to name things." The members of the species are not particularly swift or strong or fertile. They are, however, singularly resourceful. Gradually they push into regions with different climates, different predators, and different prey. On reaching Europe, they encounter creatures very much like themselves, but stockier and probably brawnier ... They interbreed with these



creatures and then ... kill them off." "Meanwhile, ... Having discovered subterranean reserves of energy, humans begin to change the composition of the atmosphere. This ... alters the climate and the chemistry of the oceans." (extinct rhino from the "Grotte Chauvet-Pont d'Arc" in France--credit to anonymous Cro Magnon)

The New Pangaea. This chapter-heading refers to the mixing of species by humans bringing them together, as if they shared the former sole continent. When an alien species has a devastating effect on a native one, it is probable that they had not met in the evolutionary past. That would have allowed the native to evolve defenses. So species of frogs that are being ravaged by the chytrid fungus probably had never encountered it. Whole populations of



bats in the eastern United States have been killed off by a white-nose fungus; one of the first caves in which it occurred connects to a commercial cavern that is a popular tourist attraction. A visitor might track in, or out, the spores of the fungus on his, or her shoes. Incidentally, the fungus has been in Europe for some time, where the bats don't seem to be harmed by it. [I didn't have the stomach to picture a sick bat with the very visible fungus, but above is a bat being studied by the Nature Conservancy, one we hope will be among many to survive in an artificially constructed and cleansed cave. Editor]

Reason for optimism. Many people care about what **Rachel Carson**, in "Silent Spring", called "the problem of sharing our earth with other creatures." Most uses of DDT were prohibited afterwards, and the numbers of bald eagles has increased. I saw a wild California condor near Hollister in 1958, but by the 1980s the total population had dropped to 22 individuals. These were captured, & chicks were raised - using puppets that resembled condors. Fake power lines were used to train birds to avoid them. The birds were vaccinated against West Nile virus and released. The population today is about 400! [over 125 in California '15]



Poor Jim's Almanac. On June 2, I noticed a chickadee entering a nest hole in a willow in the Trout Farm Picnic area. Others kept coming - about one every 10 seconds. Did the recent pruning of dead branches reduce the number of nest holes - resulting in cooperative breeding? (Chestnut-backed Chickadees drawing from Wikipedia)



MIRACLE ON BROOKS CREEK TRAIL: THE BRIDGE IS IN!

by Joseph Piro

We had a good group and a very productive May 14th Trail Day! Ranger **Greg Escoto**, **Istvan Puski**, **Vivianne Hiriart**, new-comer **Chikara Omine**, **Lucia Riedemann**, my brother **Erik** and I went up to do some work around the new bridge up on the Brooks Falls Trail. Over the course of the morning we installed 2 new retaining wall boards on either side of the bridge, cut back overgrown vegetation on both sides (mostly on the uphill side) and even got a good portion of the old, washed out bridge cut up and hauled up to the trailside for eventual removal. To all those who helped build the new bridge -- great job; it's nice and sturdy and looks good! To everyone else -- the trail's open again, so head on up to enjoy a walk up the mountainside and cross the new bridge!

ON THE TRAIL (continued)



More **grey foxes** than usual have been seen in the Park lately, a water company worker having seen a large one on the Trout Farm a bit below the **Laverne Decker** bench in early June, & **Katie Antista** seeing a small one in the Trout Farm picnic area early in

our 1st month of summer. (photo from Wikipedia) Then Katie and **Ray Trabucco** saw a **mom** with **2 kits** in the South Walnut picnic area at about 7:30pm on June 11. At precisely the same time, across the way at the fenced-in yard of the house for the old nursery, **your editor** saw a mother **deer** with 2 small, well-spotted **fawns**, one whose bottom she was fastidiously grooming. (internet photos)



You might not think **flies** eating or laying eggs together in the feces of some animal are interesting, but one might admire the showy **secondary screw worm fly, Cochliomyia macellaria**. **Ron Wilson**, shot these on May 17. **Dr. John Hafernik** gave the I.D.

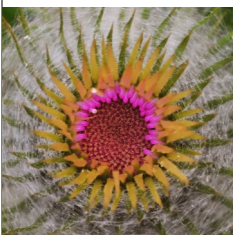


Here's another dapper fellow; at present species unknown, but a resident of our Park that **Ron** saw near the same time as the flies pictured above.



Photo of **caterpillar** is at left, one **Lakshmee Javadekar**; & husband **Jayesh** found on one of the bushes in the native sun garden Sunday, June 12, in the afternoon.

But things were really buggy that day, prompting **Jayesh** to capture the image of this **dragonfly** he saw flying by the entrance to the V.C.



Bing Huey's eye and his camera's eye caught the image of the fascinating **cobweb thistle, Cirsium occidentale** in mid June, a native of Montara Mt. & a real beauty when in full bloom in May.

Nor can we forget the often ignored beauty of the little **skunkweed Navarretia squarrosa**, that **Bing** saw along the trail this month of June. When you find one, press your fingers onto the sticky substance of the flowers and receptacle & smell its fragrance!



JULY-AUGUST 2016 CALENDAR

JULY TRAIL DAY

Saturday, July 9.....9am

JULY BOARD MEETING OF "FRIENDS OF SPVP"

Tuesday, July 19.....7pm

JULY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, July 16.....9am

AUGUST TRAIL DAY

Saturday, August 13.....9am

AUGUST BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, August 16

AUGUST HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, August 20.....9am

DR. LAUREN ESPOSITO'S SCORPIONS

Saturday, August 20.....6pm

For all events except the board meetings, meet at the Visitor Center. Board mtgs, call Shirley Drye 359-2934.

FACIOD—FOCUS ON WEASLES

The **long tailed weasel, Mustela frenata**, that is found in SPVP, has defenses besides its ferocity, and it needs them, as it is preyed upon by **owls, hawks, coyotes** and **foxes**, not to mention humans and our dogs. Being from the Mustelidae family, they contain two "stink bombs" near their vent with a pungent smell worse than that of a skunk. The young are very underdeveloped at birth, perhaps because a large bulge would prevent mom from going down a tight hole to capture a **deer mouse**, for instance. This strategy of having very underdeveloped newborns is definitely used by the females of the **least weasel**. (sources: "East Idaho News", & "International N.Y. Times" 6/13/16)

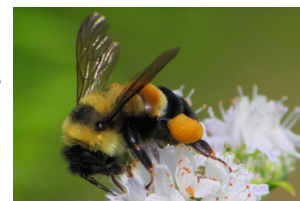
(photo by **Tin Man Lee**)



CLIMATE CHANGE CRISIS FOR BUMBLEBEES

Jeremy Kerr, an ecologist at the University of Ottawa, CAN.

says that for the first time scientists have firmly zeroed in on climate change as a widespread cause of shrinking **bumblebee** habitat. These bees do not migrate northward as the climate heats up. "A study raises concerns that popula-



tions of these valuable plant and crop pollinators, already facing decline from pesticides & pathogens, [and parasites] will continue to die out and may even disappear in some areas." This study highlights the bumblebees of Eastern North Am., which begs the question as to whether or not our bumblebees are similarly affected. This is not to say that habitat loss due to human activity is not also a very real danger to bumblebees. ("Nature" Magazine)



Joseph Piro

Here are some happy “Friends” at the May 7 bbq. Front row: Ranger Greg, Eileen’s son, Kevin, Istvan, Sharron, Eileen, Skeeter. Back rows: Janet of Mo. (Carol’s friend), Ray, Carol, Barbara Kempster, Ranger Matt, our fearless leader, Judy, Judy’s husband, Kevin’s wife, ?, Katie Antista, Carolyn, ?, Nancy, Roger, Katy Beltrano, Jack, Jim Steele, Julia Bott, Eileen’s husband, Barbara V’s friend, Shirley, Bevan, Carl, ? Jennifer, Eric (Joseph’s brother), Roger, Isabel, retired Ranger Doug, Joseph, Barbara VanderWerf (author of the Montara Mt. book)



Ranger Darrick takin’ a break!

Istvan Puski



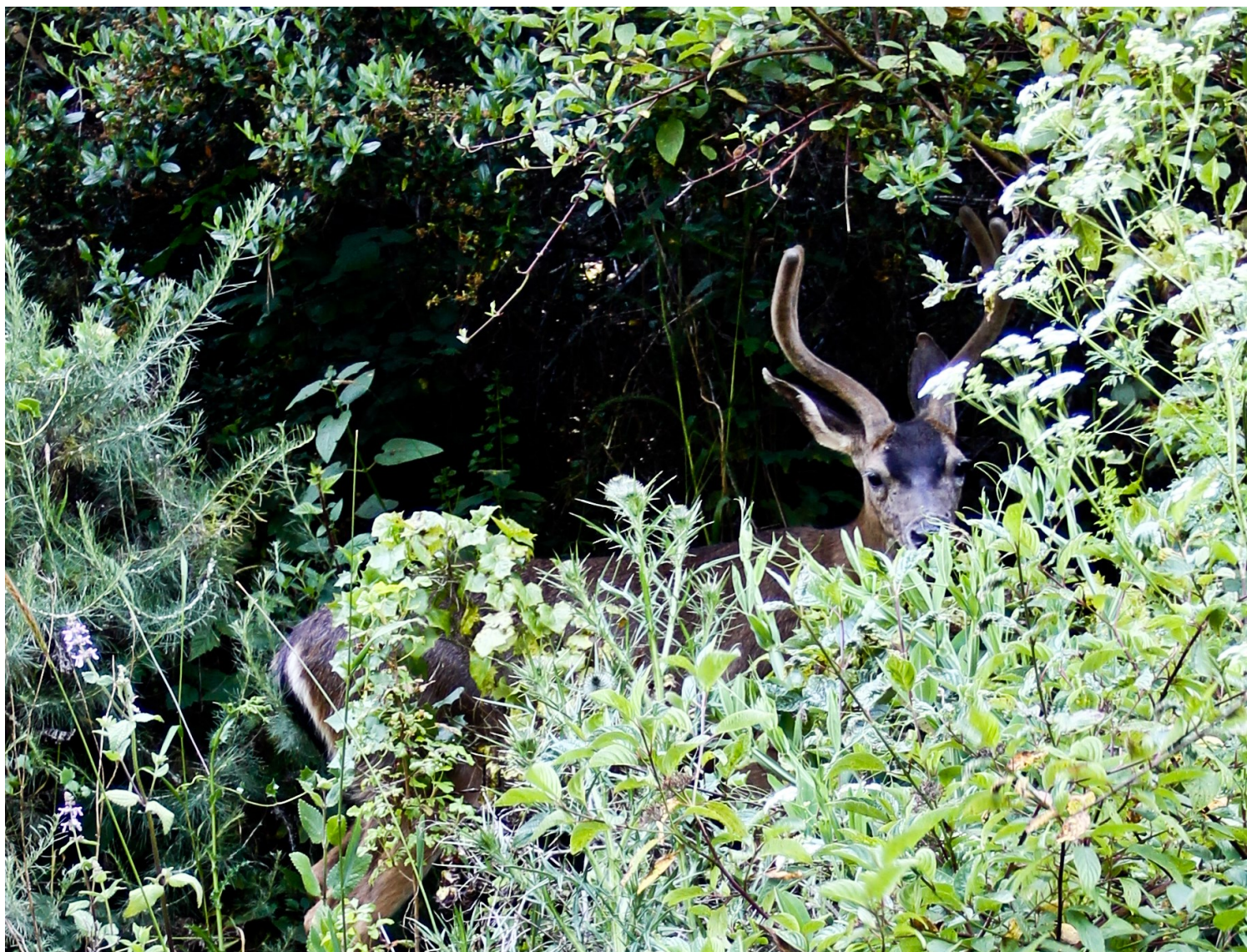
Joseph Piro

Istvan Puski and Ranger Greg Escoto—dynamite workers



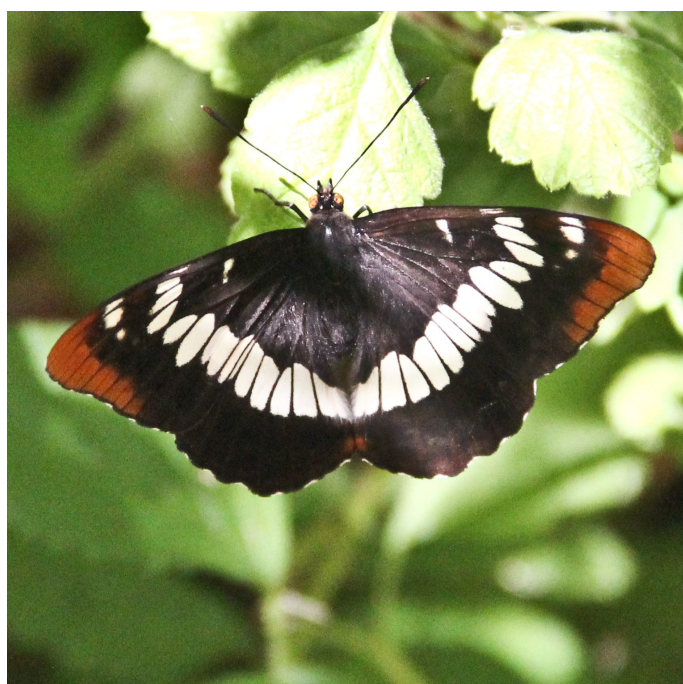
Fait accompli!

Joseph Piro



Hidden deer seen and photographed on the far end of the lower Trout Farm Trail on 6/3 at 2pm by Ron Wilson.

Butterflies are also photographed by Ron Wilson in our Park.



Limenitus lorquini; Lorquin's Admiral butterfly



Polygona satyrus; Anglewing butterfly



Sharron Walker



Some of your bonus email photos: **Joseph Piro** snapped the great sky & vegetation up the Brooks Creek Trail on June trail day. **Sharron Walker** photo is of **Jim Steele** starting his May bird song walk. I believe **Ranger Darrick Emil** took these Brooks Creek Bridge construction photos I knew some of you would want to see. You can see why **Jim Steele**, **Bing Huey**, and **Keith Mangold** were needed to carry the gigantic beams up the steep trail. What a huge job it was! And, according to **Ranger Emil**, retired SPVP ranger, **Doug Heisinger**, supervised and built the original bridge with volunteers only, an amazing feat. This Park and its rangers & volunteers rock!