

FIRE ECOLOGY with WINSLOW BRIGGS on FEBRUARY 18 AT 3PM



On Saturday, February 18, at 3pm, Dr. Winslow Briggs of Stanford University will speak to us on fire ecology, an important topic for all of our state, but particularly for chaparral dwellers. He will concentrate on the area for which he did a great deal of on-site research: Henry Coe State Park, just east of Gilroy. Below is the biography that Winslow sent to me.

"I did get started in my love of natural history as a child, first spending summers, accompanying my father as he ferreted out every Minnesota wildflower he could photograph, taking family canoe trips in the Superior National Forest, collecting plants for a botanist at the University of Minnesota in the Superior National Forest, & doing a great deal of mountaineering and backpacking. My formal field is plant biochemistry and molecular biology with special interest in plant responses to light. (We discovered and characterized the molecule that perceives light direction and transmits a signal to the plant to grow toward the light



I became intensely interested in the recovery of vegetation after the Lick Fire in 2007 that burned 46,000 acres of Henry W. Coe State Park. (Cal State Parks' photo of Henry Coe State Park fire in 2007) I put a proposal to the Monterey District of California State Parks & received permission to train a cadre of volunteers in the sorts of observations we needed and the project was approved--the origin of the talk. I

am also revising a book I wrote on the Trails of Henry W. Coe State Park." (Winslow Briggs photo of the return of **whispering bells** after the 2007 fire below, left.)



Winslow received his PhD from Harvard in 1952, and has been a professor of botany at Stanford and Harvard Universities. Since 1993, he has been the Director Emeritus, Department of Plant Biology, Carnegie Institution of Washington.

SPIRIT OF THE RAIN FOREST by WILDLIFE ASSOCIATES—FEB 22

Mark Weds. February 22, 1pm on your calendar as part of your New Year's resolution to do more fun activities with your children, grandchildren or neighbor's kids. They will delight in watching the responses of the **Scarlet Macaw**, the **tropical porcupine** (photo), the **Spectacled Owl**, the little **skink** and the awesome **ant-eater** as the experienced W.A. handlers and presenters bring them to the "stage".



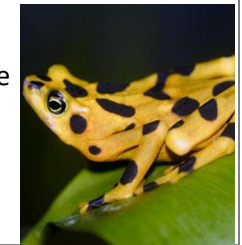
NEWT ROCKNEY-SEVERE THREATS to AMPHIBIANS-JAN 21

On January 21, at 3pm, Ms. Heidi "Newt" Rockney will introduce you to the world of the **amphibians**, highlighting the diseases plaguing them and threatening their survival, in particular the **chytrid fungal pathogen**, which she has studied in the SFSU laboratory of Dr. Vance Vredenberg.



Newt Rockney always had a dream of studying frogs in Costa Rica, but that plan was waylaid when an accident put her in a wheel chair for a time; after a few years of tough recovery, just as she was to enter her senior year at the UW, she "won" the scholarship that took her not only towards her amphibian dream in Costa Rica's Cloud Forest, but gave her the chance to make a film of the miracles unfolding among its squirming, watery green "jungle". Then began the evolving set of inspirations that told her she could communicate the wonders of nature, especially of the **frog** and **salamander** variety, to audiences, on the web via photos & films, & as a speaker.

Heidi received her BS in biology from the U. of Wash., where she was Phi Beta Kappa for 4 yrs; at present she is a graduate student at SFSU, having received a SFSU Provost Scholar Award and a National Sci. Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship for 3 years. She is now a research student working in Dr. Vredenberg's lab. (Wikipedia photo of **Golden Frog**, a denizen of C.A.)



ON THE TRAIL



Feline critters: Park Aide **Robert Rybak** saw the **bobcat** in the **willows** at the south end of the South Walnut Picnic Area many times in Nov. & Dec. On Nov. 28, **Barbara Kempster** saw one of the feline hunters after a tip from **Ranger Shane Rodgers** sent her to the So. Wal. where he'd been mowing in the am. This had stirred up or cut up some tender **meadow voles**, etc., undoubtedly prompting the whiskered stalker to procure some fine steak & chops among the wreckage during that pm. On Dec. 9, noon, **Laurie Nikitas** saw a **bobcat** in the meadow across from the Valley View trailhead, "Just chillin'."

Barbara K. startled a rusty-orange decorated **Black-headed Grosbeak** (Janesh Jayaraman photo) on the W. Hazelnut trail by the 1st bench, w. end. The mate of this male seemed to be calling from the opposite side of the trail at 11am, Nov. 18. A little **song sparrow** was gathering seeds at the 1/2 mile mark. (See page 2)

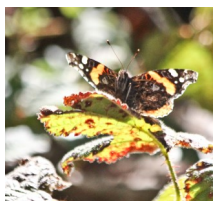




ON THE TRAIL (continued)

Just as her hiking partner complained, "I keep looking for a flower in bloom.", Katie Antista responded, "But look at the **milkmaids** right here!"—seen at the end of the Weiler Ranch Road on a chilly Dec. 19th pm after 2 days of heavy am frost.

On Sunday, Dec. 18, 2 hikers on the far end of the Montara Mt. trail reported a deep freezing hike with ice by the trail just after the exposed, rocky switchback.



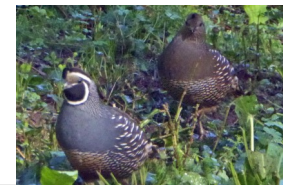
Ron Wilson photographed what could have been a new emergence of a **Vanessa atalanta**, the **Red Admiral**, on the Hazelnut Trail near the eucalyptus forest, on Dec 1.

Laurie Nikitas had a bit of a **banana slug** fest on various days in the last 6 weeks, which included her macabre photo of a voracious slug scavenging a downed comrade? And a sexual encounter. (Also see p. 5*)



Sharron Walker

sent in her bioblitz day photo of this **Calif Quail** pair she saw on the Trout Farm Trail on that Dec. 3 morning.



(*only available in our online PDF edition)

WEEDS AWAY WITH ISTVAN



Istvan Puski spent a rainy, windy and cold 2 hours of weeding by the Visitor Center and on the Trout Farm Trail, helping us hold back the tide of **oxalis, sheep sorrel, and invasive grasses**, etc. Istvan sends out a challenge to all Englishmen, Italians, Chinese, Latinos and liberated women, etc. to join a typically seasoned and rugged Hungarian for a little work challenge on the third Saturday in January and February at 9am.

DRAMA IN THE RAIN ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

Yellow slickers and all, **Ranger Greg Escoto**, Ranger X, & our legendary Hungarian, toiled: hacking & shoveling away at rain trenches on the Brooks Creek Trail in a drenching downpour. The County seems to have found some really rain proof coats, but Istvan, without such a garment, carried on despite being soaked through to the skin. All who will take advantage of strolling up this pathway to view the waterfalls since that day (for sure **Prudence Bothen & Bing Huey**), falls which have gushed like Yosemite's best, should thank our steadfast trio for keeping this trail passable!

SHARRON WALKER RECIPIENT OF COUNTY RECOGNITION

We are proud of our Trailside Store manager, active board member, & contributor to our web site & informative displays in the museum: **Sharron Walker**, was honored at the vol. appreciation luncheon by our volunteer chief for S.M. Co. Parks, **Carla Schoof**, for her work for "the Friends of San Pedro Valley Park" as well as her enthusiastic and tireless work as an "ambassador" on the Devils Slide Trail.

Whenever Sharron gets involved in a project for our Park and the Friends she gives it 100%. Without her & our other fairly new board members including: President, Membership Chair, & website keeper, **Jim Steele**; Treasurer & w.s. initiator & contributor, **Bing Huey** & Visitor Cntr. Coordinator, **Mila Stroganoff**, we would have been in a tough bind. Thanks goes out to all of them, but for now let's celebrate with Sharron.

When in our museum look for Ms. Walker's Step display, a monument to the efforts of her students from '92-'04, when they placed live steelhead eggs into San Pedro Creek to help a struggling population. Also note her loan of a large mortar & pestle under a plaque about our **Ohlone** group, & visit her cleverly organized Trailside Store: books, toys, cards, etc.



SAVING THE SUN GARDEN!

by **Joseph Piro**

Our November 12th Trail Day was pretty mellow. There was a big trail run in the Park, so instead of heading up the trails and perhaps getting in the way, we decided to do some work around the Visitor's Center. **Vivianne Hiriart, Lucia Riedemann, Istvan Puski, Keith** and I worked with Rangers **Greg Escoto** and **Matthew Tolmasoff** to spruce up the Sun Garden and surrounding areas -- we pulled weeds, trimmed low-hanging branches, raked up lots of leaves and more, all under a nice sunny sky (until the fog came in). Nothing like a little Fall gardening clean-up! (photo by **Piro**)



MANZANITAS and VASEY on the BROOKS CREEK TRAIL

by Bing Huey

On Saturday, December 3, **Dr. Mike Vasey** led his fourth and last in a series of hikes focusing on the elegant, red-barked **manzanitas** of San Pedro Valley Park. Mike, who is an extraordinary teacher and ecologist, has spent years studying the manzanitas of California and beyond and has coauthored



an authoritative field guide on these diverse plants. (photo of Dr. Vasey & students with super swath of **manzanita** by **Bing Huey**)

Dr. Vasey’s passion for manzanitas has let him into detailed morphological studies, as well as DNA explorations, but distinguishing between these 2 species: for instance heart-shaped leaves in the **Montara manzanita** and no burls, versus the burl-bearing **brittle leaf manzanita**, was fairly straightforward. However, he stressed that the taxonomy of the whole genus still needs extensive work.

The 18 of us began our hike by ascending the Brooks Creek

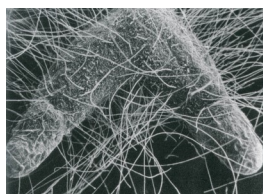


Trail, where we observed the **Montara manzanita** and the **brittle leaf manzanita** growing together, the former already in its tiny, white, urn-shaped bloom. He reminded us that only the Montara species is endemic to our mountain and the Park; this is consistent with a number of other

manzanita species being found in one location and nowhere else. (photo of *A. montarensis* blossoms by **Neal Kramer**)

As we hiked past the falls, he showed us some of the factors, such as soil, that have affected the distribution of these plants. Plants of this genus, **Arctostaphylos**,

tend to survive in soil of too poor quality to support other chaparral or coastal scrub species, an ability due largely to their symbiotic association with **mycorrhizal fungi** in the soil.



(root tips colonized with **mycorrhizal threads** that take nutrients from the soil—thanks to **Chris Todd** article in “Pacific Horticulture”)

Along the way, Mike discussed other aspects of the ecology of these plants, such as their strategies for surviving the extended dry periods characteristic of the Mediterranean climate we live in, as how they cope with fire. He discussed how they are pollinated, & the role of rodents in the dispersal of their seeds.

Our hike continued up along the Montara Mountain Trail beyond the park boundary and through the large area of granitic geology, a story in itself, and we eventually arrived at the exposed overlook where we stood among another stand of Montara manzanita. Unlike those we saw earlier that were upright and even tree-like, these were prostrate, growing closer to the ground. (photo with prostrate manzanita in (background and granite from **janinsanfran** blog.)



HOLIDAY PARTY WAS LIKE OLD-TIME FAMILY GATHERING

With **Jennifer Alpaugh’s** original decorations on our Christmas tree, and **Ranger Derrick Emil’s** newly cut Douglas fir, **Skeeter Noah & Carol Martinez** and **Jen** were able to see everyone enjoy the culmination of all their organizing, whirlwind placements and last minute decisions that made for a fun party: **Rob Hughes** played the flute beautifully, matching the key we wished to sing in, as we belted out “Jingle Bell Rock”, (“belted” to the flute?) & other lively pieces Jennifer had unearthed; & all these people chatted, joked and laughed together: **Katie Beltrano, Susan Herring, Shanna, Jack Coats, Roger Mascio, Shirley Drye, Nattie Juvland, Carolyn Pankow, Bing and Marianne Huey, Istvan Puski, Judy and David Bacon, Isabel Ebert and Steve Robinson, Mila & Adrian Stroganoff, Prudence Bothen and husband, Sharron Walker and Bevan Jones**, and of course, **Carol, Skeeter, Jennifer and Rob and Jim Steele**. Then Santa Steele led the gift stealing. The only glitch: **Mila** had to be restrained in a bid for revenge at the cruel plotting by **Carolyn** to steal her beloved scarf gift and cleverly woven basket from Cuba. And so much wine was stolen that we almost called in the ATF. For future Holiday Parties you are cautioned against bringing award-winning wines & designer gifts, lest all good cheer be forgotten. (**Skeeter, Carol, & Jennifer** led our party; photo by **Sharron Walker**)



MUSHROOM BIOBLITZ AND J.R. BLAIR TALK

by Jim Steele

Early December is prime time for mushroom collecting, and San Pedro Valley Park's second bioblitz on Dec. 3, led by SFSU's J.R. Blair did not disappoint. While a visit to the drier south-facing



slopes of the Valley View trail & Weiler Ranch Road yielded only 3 mushroom species, the blitz teams that traversed the more moist north-facing Brooks Falls, Montara Mountain, & Hazelnut trails harvested an additional 30 species. The more notable species were the colorful Turkey Tail (*Tremetes*



versicolor, shown above left in you-tube photo), latex bleeding

Lactarius species

(Wikipedia photo above right), the deadly **Death Cap**, **Amanita**

phalloides, wispy



coral fungi (in wisc.edu photo at above left), & delectable **Chanterelle**.

(Above, right—cropped Sharron Walker photo of **Chanterelle**, *Cantharellus cibarius*; Trout Farm Trail, past water gate on bioblitz day)



The bioblitz teams displayed their collections for all to see and after a great talk by JR on fungi biology, he educated all on the unique id characteristics applicable to the day's collection based on spore colors, shape of gills & pores, shape of

mushroom cap & stipe, and coloration. As all mushroom collectors know, a 1-day survey never encounters all the species inhabiting a region, so JR has graciously offered to lead blitzes in the following yrs. (**Sharron Walker** photo of **Blair**, folks, **mushrooms**)

Blitz-identified mushrooms will soon be listed in our species list on the Friends of SPVP site: friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org/species/ . **Ron Wilson** has created a binder of mushroom photos for **YOU** to contribute to. Also, we encourage members to use their smart phones to photograph any additional species observed while hiking in the park and upload them to iNaturalist. The iNaturalist app is easily downloaded, and photographs of species uploaded to iNaturalist will not only pinpoint their GPS coordinates within the park, but allow other experts to identify any unidentified species. We are in the planning stages of another park bioblitz in early April focused on flowering species. The April date will hopefully capture the tail end of early blooming species as well as later blooming species during that month.

(continued at right)

JANUARY—FEBRUARY 2017 CALENDAR

JANUARY TRAIL DAY

Saturday, January 14.....9am

JANUARY FRIENDS BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, January 17.....7pm

JANUARY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, January 21.....9am

HEIDI, "NEWT" ROCKNEY'S AMPHIANS IN TROUBLE

Saturday, January 21.....3pm

FEBRUARY TRAIL DAY

Saturday, February 11..... 9am

FEBRUARY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, February 18.....9am

WINSLOW BRIGGS' FIRE ECOLOGY

Saturday, February 18.....3pm

FEBRUARY FRIENDS BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, February 21.....7pm

SPIRIT OF THE RAINFOREST CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Wednesday, February 22.....1pm*

*For all events: meet at the Visitor Center excepting board mtg. *A Wildlife Associates, Half Moon Bay pgm*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I enjoyed your "Seasons for Color". A Christian in the Dark Ages probably believed in a "doctrine of signatures" - i.e. that the Creator used color or design to inform us how to interact with his creations. But 1 in 10 men are red-green color-blind, whereas only 1 in 100 women are. Is the Creator sexist? Maybe women are more in need of distinguishing red poison oak, since they are the gatherers? (Is this an example of my "whimsical slant"?)

James Mackey

California grape can be a very aggressive vine. Friends of SBM planted one in our old greenhouse in SSF and within 2 years it climbed 25 feet up to the top and covered a horizontal area of 40 feet. I finally had to rip it before it consumed the entire back of the nursery. Many species put out new leaves that are tinged at the edges with deep red, and **poison oak** is one of them .

Doug Allshouse

We also thank the **S.M. Co. Park rangers** for recruiting interested naturalists for the bioblitz as well as supplying snacks for all participants. We are extremely grateful for these joint efforts between our rangers and citizen scientists, because they are essential for compiling lists of species that will allow us to be better environmental stewards. [**In closing: Let this deadly deathcap Amanita be a reminder to not pick and eat mushrooms in SPVP or any place without an expert at hand.** Pho-

to:www.mushroom-appreciation]





Ron Wilson's beautiful mule deer buck he photographed on the Valley View Trail on 12/3/2016



Laurie Nikitas' banana slug mushroom gourmand in Nov./Dec



Bing Huey: Mushroom season for the Banana Slug: a delicious Bolete.



Bing Huey photographed our lovely **hookedspur violet, *Viola adunca***, from at least 2 different views while on the Dec. 3 Mike Vasey hike into Manzanita country. To see these, Bing says you must go past the junction of the Montara Mt. Trail with the Brooks Creek Trail; then just keep going, all the while looking at the edge of the trail.

