

*Our website: [friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org](http://friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org) offers info on new natural history programs, recordings of past programs, info on animals and plants in SPVP, and much more!*

**Our email:** [friendsofsanpedrovalley@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofsanpedrovalley@gmail.com)

## **WEBINAR\* with ROBERT LEWIS: May 17, 2022**

### **A Bird's Rainbow**

On **Tuesday, May 17th at 7 pm**, Robert Lewis, master birding class instructor in the San Francisco Bay area, will present a fascinating program on the colors of birds. Many birds are brightly colored; others use patterned feathers for camouflage.

How do these colors originate?

What's the difference between colors from pigments and physical colors?

From Yellow warblers to Anna's Hummingbirds, from Snow Geese to Brewer's Blackbirds, each species makes unique use of the feather colors it possesses. What do the colors indicate to other birds? And do birds see the same colors we do? Bob will unravel for us some of the mysteries of color in birds with a little chemistry, a bit of physics, and a lot of brightly colored slides.



Bob trained as a chemist and worked in the energy field for 33 years. He has taught birding classes in the San Francisco Bay Area for over 25 years (Birds of the



Bay Area, Avian Evolution, Master Birding, etc.) and served as adult education chair on the board of Golden Gate Audubon. He was honored with the American Birding Association Chandler Robins Award for Conservation and Education in 2016, and Golden Gate

Audubon's Paul Covel award for Education in 2017. His life list is over 5000 and he loves to talk about birds. He is an award-winning photographer, focusing on birds, and he hopes to resume his travels with trips to Bhutan and Alaska in 2022.

## **Two May Bird Walks in San Pedro Valley Park**

Our esteemed Friend and bird song identification man, **Jim Steele**, will once again be leading not one, but two Saturday morning walks in the park, **on May 7 and May 28**. He'll help you recognize which bird is announcing itself, as well as identifying them by sight. Meet Jim at **8 am in front of the Visitor Center** on both days. **Bring your binoculars.**

## **WEBINAR\* with BING QUOCK: June 14, 2022**

### **Exploring the Night Sky**

What's up in the evening sky that can be seen with the unaided eye or with just a pair of binoculars? Be sure to join us on **Tuesday, June 14th at 7pm** as long-time amateur astronomer **Bing Quock** gives us a tour of the heavens, including seasonal constellations and asterisms, notable deep-sky objects, and a sneak peek at a few upcoming events, including meteor showers, interesting configurations of the Moon and planets, and notable space launches. Interested in purchasing a telescope for yourself or as a gift? What are some recommendations and affordable resources? We'll explore the heavenly hobby of stargazing!



Bing Quock was bitten by the astro-bug while growing up during the height of the Space Race. Drawn away (though not completely) from dinosaurs to the science of the stars by the writings of Patrick Moore and Carl Sagan, he parlayed his childhood interest into a career, having since taught astronomy courses at both the informal and college-levels. He is currently Assistant Director of Morrison Planetarium at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. He is a frequent interviewee on local media, explaining astronomical events, and writes daily skywatching tips that are distributed to approximately 30 newspapers across the country. He is the 2020 recipient of the Western Amateur Astronomers' G. Bruce Blair Medal for career achievements in amateur astronomy.



## **A Naturalist's Walk in San Pedro Valley Park**

Sign up for a 1.5 hour nature stroll with J.R. Blair, on Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:30 am. This walk has a limit of 15 people and sign-ups are done using the following Eventbrite link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-naturalists-walk-in-san-pedro-valley-park-tickets-231955754907>. (Continued on Page 4)

**\* Zoom Webinar instructions are on Page 4**

## A review of the Naturalist's Walks in San Pedro Valley Park By Mila Stroganoff

On Saturday, February 26<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> a group of fifteen people gathered to reconnect with nature in San Pedro Valley Park. Communing and reconnecting with nature is done slowly, thoughtfully, quietly, and with multiple stops. J.R. Blair led these two walks and we covered different locations in the park. J.R. calls this type of a walk a "mosey" and I think it is a fitting description.



I was thrilled to be on the walks and both times there was an amiable group of folks. We all noticed and learned so much and to tell you the truth, I'm having some difficulty to

know where to start. We discussed ravens and crows, turkeys, and vultures. We saw and heard various songbirds, more so this last time. There were Townsend's warblers, Chestnut-backed chickadees, Ruby-crowned kinglets, Wilson's warblers, Song sparrows, Juncos, and Hummingbirds. Ah, the ferns were a popular subject on the first walk. There are a great many species of ferns to be found in the park and J.R. explained how to tell them apart and how they reproduce.



During this last walk, he discussed the female willows and how the wind was dispersing their seeds in puffs of white fluff. There are two separate willows – the male plant which produces the pollen and the female plant which produces the seeds. Besides the willow, the Coyote Brush and Silk Tassel also have separate male and female plants and are called

dioecious. Most other species contain both the female and male parts on the same plant, and these are referred to as monoecious such as the alder and oaks. We have plenty of the latter in the park.

Eucalyptus trees were discussed. There are over 600 different species in Australia. We have several species growing in the park and when you go for a walk in the park, you may notice that there isn't too much growing in the understory. There is a compound these trees produce that inhibits other plants from growing there.

One very important lesson that we started each walk with was being able to recognize poison oak. You are probably familiar with the saying "Leaves of three, let it be." Due to the fact the most people are allergic to the oil that poison oak produces, it is very important to be able to tell poison



oak apart from brambles. To boot, poison oak changes colors in the fall, is deciduous, so drops its leaves and this, of course, makes it a tad more difficult to recognize throughout the year. But beware, any part of it remains a cause for concern.

We happened upon Trilliums on our first walk. We saw the *Trillium ovatum* and the flower rests on a peduncle or a pedestal and the *Trillium chloropetalum*, the flower of which rests in the cradle of three leaves. These come up from bulbs and are truly beautiful flowers that are a harbinger of spring.

To really get a feel of what the park contains, to uncover its secrets, the best bet is to come on one of these nature walks and have a good look. It really is a wondrous adventure.



**BUGS, BUGS, BUGS!**

**Summary of March 22nd Webinar Program**

**Presenter: Dr. Stephanie Dole**

**by Judy Bacon**

Many of us have had the pleasure to see the Beetle Lady, otherwise known as Stephanie Dole, in person when she has brought her amazing displays of insects to the park for one of our summer children's programs. But on March 22, 2022, we were able to truly enjoy the depth of Stephanie's expertise...just for us adults...when she presented a wonderful program on the diversity of beetles. Stephanie has been educating the public about insects since 1977. She holds a PhD in Entomology from Michigan State University.



There are currently about 1 million described species of insects but a total of 5 to 20 million species are thought to exist! Over 100,000 insect species have been recorded in California, compared to 223 mammals and 641 birds in the state. There is just an incredible diversity in the insect world, encompassing differences in size, reproductive strategy, flight, wing folding and metamorphosis. Just on their own, beetles, which are in the scientific order Coleoptera, include more than 450,000 described species!



Dr. Dole went on to introduce us to the Bess Beetle, who feeds on rotting wood and relies on bacterial symbiosis to aid in digestion. These beetles live in

social groups, can squeak, and care for their young.

She noted that we are changing our attitudes toward insects. She then talked about which is worth protecting more, the California Condor or the California Condor louse!

We are thrilled that Stephanie will be at our park once again this summer with her beetle friends on Saturday, July 2, 2022 at 11:00 am in the North Walnut grove picnic area. Hope to see you there!

**Friends of SPVP Photo Contest....**



The deadline for submittals to the Friends' inaugural photo contest was May 1st. Review and judging of the images received was set to commence during the first week of May with the final decisions of the judges to be announced by May 13. Please look to our website and your email boxes around that date to find out who the winners are in each of the four categories, as well as the overall Members' Choice winner. Thank you to all the fine member photographers who submitted their best efforts!

**Earth Day 2022! Another Successful Volunteer Event in SPVP! By Sharron Walker**

Thanks to all for showing up and pitching in! Weeding is always a challenge, but needs to happen before new plantings! We created a "Weed Me" poster to help identify invasives and what to weed! Next time you are at the park check out the Native Plant Garden, Visitor Center front yard, and two nearby Island areas. The Native Plant Garden still needs a lot of weeding, but the other areas are free of weeds allowing our



native plant to flourish!! Thank you volunteers!!!



Unfortunately as folks were on hands and knees, busy weeding & planting, we did not have the opportunity to take a group photo so would like to acknowledge the following volunteers for their hard work and dedication:

Jack Coots, Melanie Heisler, Maryann Huey, Bevan Jones, Cathleen Josaitis, Kathy Kellerman, Irene Lee, Brian Spigelman!!

Board members, including Judy, Bing, Carolyn, Mark, Carl and Enid were integral

(Cont'd on Pg. 4)



**Earth Day 2022 Event** (continued from Page 3)

members of the Earth Day Team! Stu Smith, SMCP Volunteer Coordinator provided supplies and provided invaluable horsepower as well!



The “Water Lillies,” who watered after our 2021 Earth Day planting, will be reactivated as the new plants will need watering. So if you want to help and/or interested in volunteering to weed and/or do trail work let us know.



**A Naturalist’s Walk with J.R. Blair**

(continued from Page 1)

J.R. will discuss anything interesting that catches his eye, whether plant, animal, insect, etc. Please note that this walk will be more of a snail-paced stroll than a hike. We will be stopping frequently to talk about the plants, animals, insects, and fungi that we encounter along the way.

**MAY/JUNE 2022 CALENDAR**

**MAY TRAIL DAY**

**Saturday, May 14** ..... 9 am

**MAY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**

**Saturday, May 21** ..... 10 am

**STEELE: GUIDED BIRD WALKS in SPVP**

**Saturday May 7** ..... 8 am

**Saturday May 28** ..... 8 am

**LEWIS: A BIRD’S RAINBOW: Webinar\***

**Tuesday, May 17** ..... 7 pm

**JUNE TRAIL DAY**

**Saturday, June 11** ..... 9 am

**JUNE HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**

**Saturday, June 18** ..... 10 am

**QUOCK: EXPLORING the NIGHT SKY: Webinar\***

**Tuesday, June 14** ..... 7 pm

**ON the OLD TROUT FARM/BROOKS CREEK TRAIL**

**by Joseph Piro**

For our **April 9, 2022 Trail Day**, Istvan Puski, my brother Erik & I hiked the Old Trout Farm/Brooks Creek Trail route to check on conditions. Everything looked in good shape and we only trimmed back some branches along the way. We chatted with many other hikers along the way who were out enjoying the sunny weather (some just doing the loop and some headed all the way up the mountain) and even one woman who showed us a picture of a pretty flower she had taken on her phone and was wondering what it was — a Trillium! Happy Trails!



**\*Online ZOOM WEBINAR Registration Instructions\***

**by Adrian Stroganoff**

**Go to:** <http://friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org>. In the Events section you will find a link to the registration page for each webinar. **Enter your name and email address to register.** You will get a confirmation email with further instructions, as well as reminder emails one week, one day and one hour prior to the event.

**Leaders of “The Friends of SPVP”:** President: **Judy Bacon**; Vice President: **Mark Golembiewski**; Secretary: **Enid Ansgarius**; Treasurer: **Susan Kern**; Visitor Center Host Coordinator: **Carl Schwab**; Habitat Restoration Leader: **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader: **Joseph Piro**; Membership Director: **Adrian Stroganoff**; Director of Programs and Field Trips: **Mila Stroganoff**; Zoom Webinar Program Coordinators: **Mila & Adrian Stroganoff**; Director of Hospitality: **Judy Bacon**; Directors of Website Management: **Lakshmi Javadekar & Jayesh Kapoor**; Trailside Store Manager: **Melinda Moses**; Newsletter Editor: **Carolyn Pankow (pankowinca@gmail.com)**; Members-at-large: **Bing Huey, Sharron Walker**

## **Morgan Stickrod's Native Trees of California Webinar**

By Bing Huey

Giving a thorough overview of California trees is a formidable undertaking. Our speaker, Morgan Stickrod, takes up the challenge with his webinar of 22 February 2022.

Our state, a recognized floristic province, encompasses much varied topography and geology and numerous climate regimes. As a result, California has a great diversity



of trees in all groups, and a number of endemics. Of the latter, some are so-called paleo endemics, those that once had wide distribution but whose range greatly contracted due to changing climate. California can also boast of extreme, or "champion" trees, such as the tallest (coast redwood), largest (giant sequoia), oldest (bristlecone pine), and those bearing

the longest (sugar pine) and heaviest cones (Coulter pine).

Morgan Stickrod is eminently qualified to speak of the trees in this, his native state. Since finishing his graduate studies at San Francisco State University, Morgan has held a number of botanist positions and is currently working at the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. His background in plants and plant ecology fuels a fascinating and highly informative survey of California trees. Morgan methodically described tree types, such as broadleaf versus conifer, evergreen versus deciduous, the numerous habitat types, and the various ways trees are adapted to living in forests or woodlands.

In his consideration of California conifers, Morgan noted there are three families in the state, Cupressaceae, Pinaceae, and Taxaceae. He showed how they are often adapted to the most challenging environments, which can be the rockiest, most windblown, or snowiest habitats. It is referred to as "evasive survival strategy," living in suboptimal conditions in order to outcompete faster growing plants. This also includes adapting to nutrient-poor or chemically challenging soils. Another part of this strategy is the conifers' link to fire, retaining seeds in their cones until after periodic fires have cleared out faster growing broadleaf angiosperms. Thus, whereas seeds of some trees, such as manzanitas, lie in soil seed banks awaiting fire to germinate, conifer seeds form canopy seed banks. Morgan gave examples of conifers adapted to varied climatic conditions in the state, all within the

so-called "Mediterranean" climate, and numerous soil types, from acidic coastal sandstone to nutrient-poor volcanic and serpentine soils. The state has a high diversity of conifers. In one particular mile-square parcel in the Klamath Mountains,



called the "Miracle Mile," one can find 18 species of conifers.

Morgan also discussed oaks, technically part of the beech family, their woodland habitats, and their ways to survive very dry conditions, such as with leaf structures that minimize water loss and deep tap roots to increase water potential.

He concluded the webinar by pointing out some of the more distinctive trees found in San Pedro Valley Park. His presentation has been recorded and will be available through the Friends website.

## **April 5th Broom Pull with Stu**

By Mark Golembiewski

The 'Weed Wrenchers,' led by County Volunteer Coordinator, Stu Smith, once again met up to do battle with the dreaded, invasive French/Scotch broom plants. Carl Schwab, Bing and Maryann Huey and I met up with Stu at the top of Park Pacifica Ave. and



hiked just a short path into the park with our heavy 'weed wrench' tools to an area just off the Valley View Trail. There was plenty of broom there to tackle, from young shoots that could be pulled out by hand, to mature bushes that were taller than us and couldn't be removed with our stem pulling tools. We gladly removed quite a bit of broom and lived to tell about it another day.

## ON THE NATURE JOURNALING TRAIL... "Birds & Their Habitats"

By Sharron Walker

Our prompt for the San Pedro Valley Park Nature Journaling group in March was birds and their habitats. We know our park is a wonderful place to see birds, both residents and migrants! At our March 10 meeting at the Trout Farm Trail picnic area, we were joined by a group of ravens! You may know that a group of crows is called a "murder," but what about ravens? "Unkindness" is the name given to a raven group based on their personality as often they are seen harassing red-tail hawks and other birds. "Conspiracy" and "congress" are other group names. A way to distinguish ravens from crows is they are larger, have long, wedge-shaped tails, and have bigger and curvier beaks.

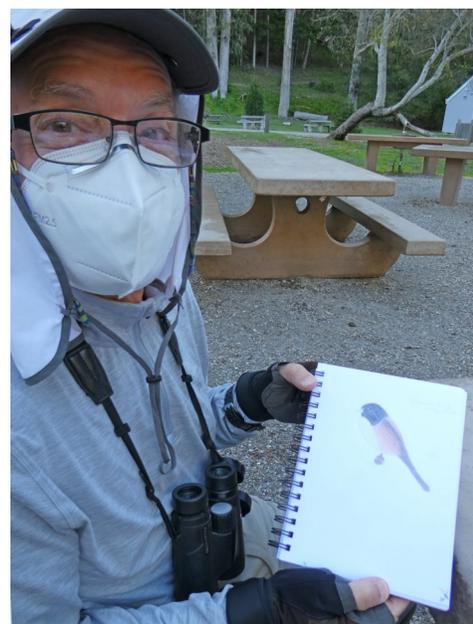
Nature journaling is not about fine art, but about being observant and curious. We meet monthly, have a prompt to focus on, and enjoy sharing and learning from one another! Past prompts have been spirals in nature, mushrooms & ferns. Our next one will be wildflowers. New members are welcome. For more info about Nature Journaling check out [johnmuirlaws.com](http://johnmuirlaws.com).



San Pedro Valley Nature Journalers



Caitlin Corley's Journal Page



Carl Schwab and his NJ Page

Spring Butterfly Sightings  
by Ron Wilson on the Trout Farm Trail



"Veined White"



"Angle Wing"



"Echo Blue"



"Common Ringlet on Honeysuckle"  
by Bing Huey on the Valley View Trail  
April 3rd

# Sharron Walker's Images Along the Way On the Valley View Trail - 3/30/22



Mule deer in the daises in Walnut Grove



Photo of a Wildlife Photographer



Franciscan/Longleaf Paintbrush

A Springtime Profusion of Trillium Along the Plaskon Nature Trail  
by Mark Golembiewski - April 2022



## Flora and Fauna in the Park in the Spring by Bing Huey



Juncos Foraging on Lawn Near Picnic Area  
on March 27, 2022



Above: Meadow rue - pistillate  
(female) plant

Left: Meadow rue - staminate  
(male) plant

Both taken along Brooks Creek  
Trail on March 10, 2022