

Sycamore Sage

The President's Message

The Preserve may be closed during and after heavy rains. For your safety, please observe all closure notices.

Hours:

November-March: 8am-5p.m

March-November 8am-7pm

For more information, call the Visitor Center at 858-513-4737

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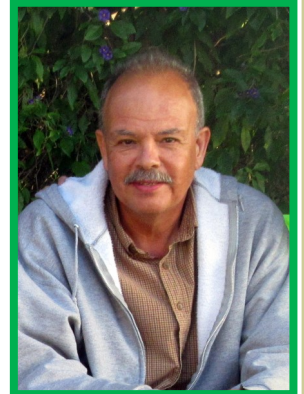
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Newsletter & Webpage
Rita Lee

Wow! It's almost winter. Sure doesn't feel like it. The weather has been perfect for hiking in San Diego County. My wife, Maureen, and I did just that in November with some friends at Sycamore Canyon Preserve. We parked at the Highway 67 Staging Area and took the Slaughterhouse Canyon Trail South. This trail will take you all the way to Eucalyptus Hills in Lakeside.

As soon as we left the parking area, I was immediately struck by the beauty of the Slaughterhouse Canyon views to the Southeast. The riparian area gets more lush as the canyon descends. The mountains in view on the east side of the canyon are perfect examples of the chaparral habitat that is so crucial to the ecosystem of our region. The whole area is a critical part of the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) that strives to provide contiguous wildlife habitat corridors.

Unfortunately this view and habitat is in danger of being completely destroyed. The mountain just to the left of the riparian oak area in this picture is being proposed by the land owner as an open pit strip mine to extract 8 million tons of aggregate in just the first 10 years of 24-hour operations. You can read more about the mine proposal in our [September issue of the Sycamore Sage Newsletter](#).



Robert Laudy



As I actually saw for myself how close this proposed mine was to the preserve and the trails, I was overcome with sadness. If a mine were truly placed there, the damage would be irreparable and unmitigable, forever. It would likely be visible the whole length of the Slaughterhouse Canyon Trail and create blasting and operational noise pollution throughout the preserve. Not to mention the devastating effect on wildlife.

Check Out and Important Read on Page 4

Rita Lee informs us of the need for wildlife crossings on our highways. As the number of vehicle collision with animals increase, highway planners need to incorporate dedicated wildlife crossings as a way to increase safety for humans and animals. Highway 67 is a perfect example of an MSCP corridor that needs these crucial improvements.

Special Note of Thanks

Supervising Park Ranger Louis Chertkow retires this month. The Friends of Goodan Ranch and Sycamore Canyon Open Space would like to thank Louis all that he has done at the preserve. He has served the citizens of San Diego County many years and we wish him all the best in retirement and future endeavors. You can read Louis' final report on page 6.

Mourning Doves or Morning Doves???

When I first heard of Mourning Doves I thought they were Morning Doves. After all, I was always seeing them in the morning. Then I learned their name comes from the sound they make. Their soft, drawn-out call sounds like a mournful lament. This call is usually from a male trying to attract a mate and not the female. The females reply so quietly they might not be noticeable.

The other unusual sound of the Mourning Dove is the distinctive and unusual whistling sound upon take-off and landing. Their long, pointed wings are almost falcon-like in appearance, while their pointed tails are longer than those of any other doves. This enables the birds to fly as fast as 55 mph!

Mourning Doves feed from dawn to dusk, eating up to 20 percent of their bodyweight each day. While they prefer to stay close to home, they can travel up to 20 miles for food. They mainly eat seeds as well as grasses, weeds, and insects. Their soft bills cannot crack open seeds so they swallow them whole with sand or gravel to help with digestion. The seeds collect in the "crop," which is simply an enlarged part of their esophagus. Then the birds head to a secluded perch to digest their food. Mourning doves often have a noticeably round breast, since it expands during feeding. Scientists once found a record-holding bird with 17,200 bluegrass seeds stuffed away in its crop.



Mourning Doves mate for life. To attract a mate, the male coos and flies in an oval pattern, flapping his wings noisily before approaching her on the ground, bowing, and puffing up his chest. After mating, the pair chooses a nesting site. It seems like Mourning Doves nest in all sorts of strange places. The male brings twigs to the female, who builds the nest at a record-breaking speed. The pair can quickly throw together a loose platform of sticks in just a few hours. Their flimsy nests are made of pine needles, twigs and grass.

The nests are so sparse that the eggs are frequently visible from below. Sometime the eggs or young fall out.

Mourning Doves have short lifespans and a high mortality rate. Because only 20 to 30 percent of hatchlings survive past one year, mourning doves raise as many as six broods in a single year. There are two eggs in each clutch. Two days after finishing the nest the first egg is laid. Two days later the female lays the second egg. The birds share parenting duties: The male incubates the eggs during the day and the female at night. After two weeks of incubation, the chicks—called squabs—are born naked, blind, and helpless. Both parents feed the babies "crop milk" or "pigeon milk." Rich in protein and fat, it resembles cottage cheese, and is secreted by the adults' crop lining, and regurgitated to the little ones.





The baby squabs feed on pure crop milk for the first week or so of life. After this the parents begin to introduce adult food into the mix. The adult food is softened by spending time in the moist conditions of the adult crop. By the end of the second week the chicks are being fed entirely on adult food.

What may be more interesting than what is fed to hatchlings is how dove hatchlings eat. Instead of the parents placing food into the hatchlings' gaping mouths, the

opposite happens. The adults open their beaks, and the babies stick their heads into the open mouths to consume food right from the parent's crop. Young doves feed this way on both crop milk and seed.



Today, the mourning dove holds the distinction of being the only native North American bird to breed in every state, including Hawaii. Their U.S. population is estimated at more than 400 million. Despite their numbers, their lives tend to be short and difficult. In any given year, more than half of the adults and two thirds of first-year birds will die.

DID YOU KNOW?



Mourning doves can suck water up through their bills like a straw, unlike many other birds who must tip their heads back to swallow water. [The Young Birder's Guide to Birds of Eastern North America](#)

The species is a game bird, with about 45 million killed by hunters in North America each year. [National Geographic's Complete Birds of North America, 2006](#)

Unlike humans, mourning doves don't need freshwater to survive. They can drink brackish water up to 25 percent as salty as seawater. [Noble Research Institute](#)

The oldest known Mourning Dove was a male, and at least 30 years, 4 months old when he was shot in Florida in 1998. He had been banded in Georgia in 1968. [The Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#)

Mourning Doves are unable to sweat and, as a result, pant in a fashion similar to dogs. Because of this, these birds must drink large amounts of water. [Wild Birds Unlimited](#)

Prevent Wild-life & Vehicle Collisions



According to the Federal Highway Administration, the number of car vs. animal collisions is growing. Over 2 million animals are killed every day on our roadways. These accidents cause more than 30,000 human injuries, about 200 human deaths, and costs over \$8 billion in damages.

Is there a solution? Experts tell us that special bridges and tunnels just for wildlife can help prevent these accidents from happening, and most times people don't even notice

them. The safety of people is the main reason for these structures, but the safety of our wildlife is equally important. The special overpasses look much like a regular overpass for cars but are planted with native plants. Undercrossings pass beneath the roads for the shy and smaller animals.



(Continued from page 4)

Locally, our wildlife uses these structures as a means to escape intense wildfires and find new habitats while the burned areas recover.

However, these wildlife crossings aren't just about saving individual animals—they're about species survival, too. In the United States, there are some species whose very survival is threatened by our roadways.



Car damage from hitting a deer

They need to safely cross our roads to find mates, live in their native habitat, and safely migrate. In some areas, there is localized extinction when populations can't find each other because of busy roadways. This is one reason why these traffic-spanning bridges and tunnels are showing up worldwide.

California alone has hundreds of animal-vehicle collision hotspots. Despite its reputation for being environmentally friendly, California lags in building these crossings. We must have a push to build special bridges and tunnels that help animals safely cross our busy roads and freeways. This push will give our local animals the ability to find food, water, and mates. It will also reduce the number of

car crashes that endanger both wildlife and humans.

Did you know:

- **Road salt laid to counter ice in the winter can lure wildlife onto the road surface, making them susceptible to oncoming cars.**
- **Most municipalities and counties dispose of roadkill in landfills.**
- **Some people collect roadkill for art.**
- **Collecting roadkill to eat is legal in 20 states**

Rangers Report

SYCAMORE CANYON GOODAN RANCH COUNTY PRESERVE

Supervising Park Ranger Louis Chertkow

- 1) Attendance in the Preserve continues to increase, especially with trail usage on weekends and holidays.
- 2) Park staff continues to monitor toads' signs are still up at the Martha's Grove Trail and Cardiac Hill trailheads to help educate trail users about toads in the preserve.
- 3) Park staff have been clearing culverts and drains along service roads and bridges, and removing branches, brush and limbs that could cause damage during rains.
- 4) Park staff hosted an educational nature table at the Visitor Center on 10/9, and 10/23. These tables provided a valuable opportunity for visitors and their families to learn about the native plants, wildlife, and history of the preserve.



Supervising Park Ranger Louis Chertkow



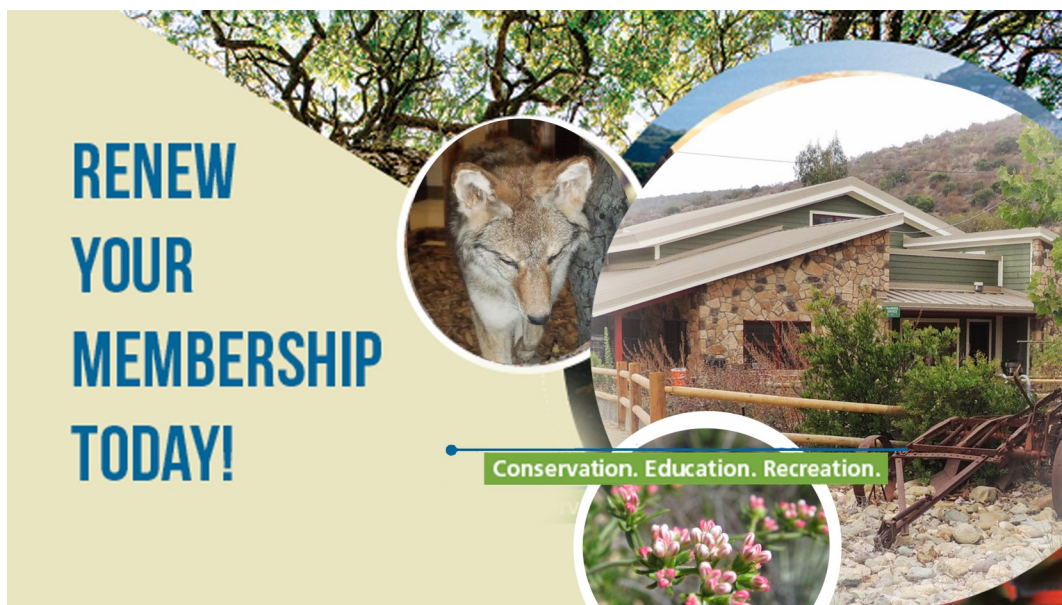
Picture caption Poway High School students performing trail clean up on 10/9/21/ Line Item 7

- 5) Park staff hosted its annual Hawktober event on 10/10/21 at the Goodan Ranch outdoor amphitheater. Senior Park Ranger Christian Gonzales provided a live demonstration with a bird of prey for 30 members of the public. The audience also learned the important role that raptors serve in the wild.
- 6) Park staff installed a new bench for trail users near the Goodan Ranch Staging Area on 10/13/21. Park Maintenance Worker Mike Ambrose hand crafted a wooden bench to replace a former worn out bench that overlooks Sycamore Canyon. The new bench provides a safe and comfortable resting spot for trail users to take a break and enjoy the scenic views of the preserve. Please see the attached picture of this bench.
- 7) Park staff hosted students from Poway High School for a preserve cleanup project on 10/9/21 and 10/16/21. Three local students helped clean up litter in each of the staging areas and along the Martha's Grove and Ridge trails. The students are regular trail users and enjoyed having the opportunity to help improve the quality of the preserve.

(Continued from page 6)

- 8) Park staff continues to support the departments Comprehensive Tree Program by caring for and watering newly planted trees and shrubs.
- 9) D&D Wildlife Habitat Restoration, in coordination with the department's Resource Management Division, continues to target and remove invasive plants in the preserve. They are concentrating on removing eucalyptus trees and other invasives in the riparian area of Sycamore Creek. This work is part of a 2-year grant funded through the San Diego River Conservancy.
- 10) Park staff continues to patrol and monitor the new preserve properties along SR67, and around the Clark Canyon area to deter unauthorized uses in these areas. Staff continue to maintain fencing, signage, and natural barriers in areas where unauthorized trail use is observed.
- 11) Park staff continue to regularly refill the water troughs around the preserve. They have been getting a lot of use recently by wildlife due to the hot temperatures in our region.
- 12) Park Host's Richard and Gail Andujo continue to assist with daily maintenance duties such cleaning Visitor Center restrooms, and vault toilets. Other duties include trail maintenance, sanding and staining park benches and picnic tables, and watering trees
- 13) Roy Derego is continuing to assist the SCGR team as Day Volunteers and have been a great addition to the team. Roy has great knowledge and enjoy's volunteering, protecting plants and wildlife, and providing great customer service. Roy's assignments consist of planting and watering trees, general vegetation management, and trail maintenance.
- 14) Kevin Leavitt is new day volunteer for DPR. Kevin works Saturdays at Goodan Ranch. Kevin provides customer service, trail maintenance, assists with watering trees, and refilling drinkers.

Don't forget to renew !!





**Friends of Goodan Ranch
&
Sycamore Canyon Open Space**
Webpage—GoodanRanch.org
Facebook—Goodan Ranch
Email—FriendsofGoodanRanch@gmail.com



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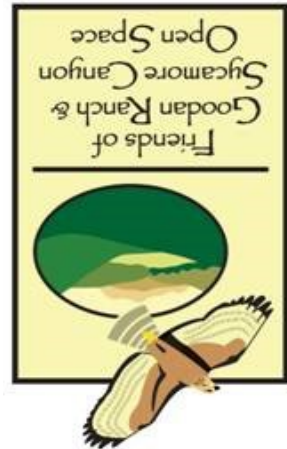
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**JOIN OR
RENEW
TODAY**

Fill out the requested information & mail it with your check to:

**Friends of Goodan Ranch & Sycamore Canyon
Memberships**

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Poway, CA 92064



The Sycamore Sage
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