



Sycamore Sage

President's Message

The Preserve may be closed during and after heavy rains.

For your safety, please observe all closure notices.

HOURS

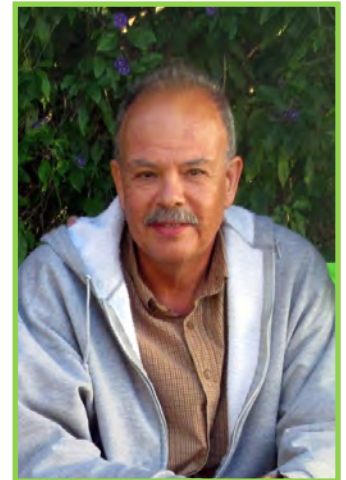
November—March: 8am - 5pm

March—November: 8am - 7 pm

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

I would like welcome Kevin Hubbell as the new Supervising Park Ranger

Kevin is a third generation San Diego native, raised in East County. Growing up he would spend his days exploring the hills near what would later become Crestridge Reserve. He learned early on the importance of land conservation after much of this area saw the construction of a large shopping center and housing development. He realizes that outdoor recreation spaces are critical for thriving communities, and especially important for today's youth.



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Robert Laudy

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Supervising Park Ranger

Kevin Hubbell

Kevin is excited to be part of the team at Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch to improve, promote, and provide great outdoor opportunities there.

Kevin has worked in a variety of day use parks, campgrounds, and open spaces -- most recently managing the Santa Ysabel Nature Center.

The next time you are in the preserve, please stop by, say hello and welcome to Kevin.

You can read Kevin's Ranger's Report on page 3.

Happy Trails!

The visitor center will have a public Wi-Fi network installed. It will connect our weather station to the weather network. Here is the link that everyone can now use to monitor conditions at the ranch:

<https://www.wunderground.com/dashboard/pws/KCAPOWAY179>

Is This What You Want to See from Sycamore Canyon Trails?



BLM Officially Says No Significant Effect on the Environment.

The Bureau of Land Management has approved the Slaughterhouse Canyon proposal for sale of mineral materials on a 119-acre site about four miles north of Lakeside in San Diego County. This sale is in response to a request from Hanson Aggregates Pacific Southwest LLC, who has operated an aggregate mining and processing facility on adjacent land to the site since the mid-1950s.

The BLM analyzed the environmental effects of the proposed sale of mineral materials and determined the proposed actions and alternatives did not have a significant effect on the environment.

For more information: <https://go.usa.gov/xzDvF>

If you use the Goodan Ranch / Sycamore Canyon Open Space, show your support by becoming a member!

Please fill out the membership form found on the back of the newsletter, place it in an envelope with your check and mail it today. You will find the form on the back of this newsletter.

Thank you.



Rangers Report

Park staff continue to monitor for Spadefoot Toad activity near Martha's Grove and Cardiac Hill.

Park staff will be hosting Star Parties on 3/23 & 5/27 and will lead interpretative hikes on 3/12, 4/24 & 5/21. We also plan to have a nature touch table every Saturday morning so visitors can get a hands-on education on local wildlife. For more information about DPR programs, please visit our website at www.sdparks.org.

All the exterior metal railing at the visitor center will be repainted. Additionally, we are looking into options to resurface the floor with a new durable floor coating.

New trail signs will replace any damaged or faded signage. Two new trail maps will be added at junctions to give users a better overview of the trails and their location within the Preserve.

Park staff will begin refurbishing the old greenhouse. It will have structural improvements, followed by a new roof and siding. The new greenhouse will include an acorn sprouting room, supply storage and be home to numerous native trees and plants. This greenhouse along with our composting area will also be used for educational programs throughout the year.

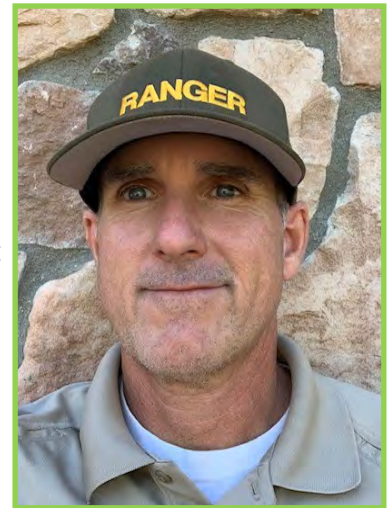
Park staff planted over 215 native trees throughout the preserve. Partnering with SDG&E, an additional 30 trees were planted by a contractor. Staff has been working tirelessly to keep these new trees healthy and watered to become the next generation tree canopy.

Doggie bag stations were added to the HWY 67 and the Goodan staging areas. Staff continue to stress the importance of cleaning up after your pet to our trail users.

In anticipation of the Spring rains, staff and volunteers have been performing trail maintenance. Roads have been graded, erosion repaired and waterbars improved. Vegetation management continues and all trails are looking great.

The well pump at Goodan Ranch received improvements with a new pump, replumbed well head, new pressure tank, and raised casing. This will ensure reliable water service to the visitor center and volunteer pad. These improvements will also make it easier for staff to access water for our wildlife drinkers and to water trees throughout the Preserve.

Park staff continue to patrol and monitor the new preserve properties along SR67, around the Clark Canyon area, and in the northern area of the preserve to deter unauthorized uses in these areas. Staff continue to maintain fencing, signage, and natural barriers in areas where unauthorized trail use is observed.



Supervising Park Ranger
Kevin Hubbell

Thank you for all of your support!

"And though she be but little, she is fierce"

William Shakespeare

Roughly the size and shape of the Mourning Dove, the American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), AKA the sparrow hawk, is the smallest and most common falcon in North America. Don't underestimate it, though. Even if it is the smallest, it may also be the fiercest of our falcons.

American Kestrels are usually solitary birds. They eat large insects (mainly grasshoppers), small mammals (mice and sparrow-sized birds), lizards, and scorpions.

From March thru July, the females engage in mating rituals with several males. The males show off complex aerial displays along with a flutter-glide to the female to bring her food. The female eventually settles with one mate and the pair establishes a partnership; they hunt, find a nest, and protect their young together.

American Kestrels do not build their own nests. They are "secondary cavity nesters". They rely upon the old nest sites of other birds. They will also readily use human-made nest boxes and even spaces provided by eaves and vents on houses or buildings. After modifying the nest to fit their needs, the female lays about 3-5 pinkish eggs and sits on the nest for about a month, with the male providing her with food. The hatchlings reach their adult weight in about 17 days. After a month, the babies are able to leave the nest.



Sadly, the American Kestrels, formerly one of our most plentiful birds of prey, are facing rapid population reductions, especially in California and New England. There are 66 percent fewer kestrels than there were in 1966.

One reason for the decline in population appears to be habitat loss. Like most falcons, kestrels love open land which allows them to hunt easily. However, records show that the American Kestrels are also disappearing from areas where boxes have been installed. So, perhaps nesting may not be the only problem.

Most of the Kestrels diet is made up of large insects like grasshoppers along with rodents and small birds. Humans have been trying to eradicate insects and rodents for years. Researchers say pesticides may be making it more difficult for kestrels to find their preferred food source.

On top of habitat loss and food-supply pressures, Kestrels also have to compete for nest space with invasive species, such as European Starlings. These invasive songbirds are notorious for displacing native cavity nesters and can be aggressive when it comes to taking over kestrel boxes.

So what can we do? Use pesticides sparingly. And for the most fun, Kestrel lovers and bird enthusiasts can help the bird population by volunteering to build and check nest boxes in their area.

[Installing & Monitoring A Nest Box | American Kestrel Partnership \(peregrinefund.org\)](http://peregrinefund.org)



Rhus Ovato Sugar Bush

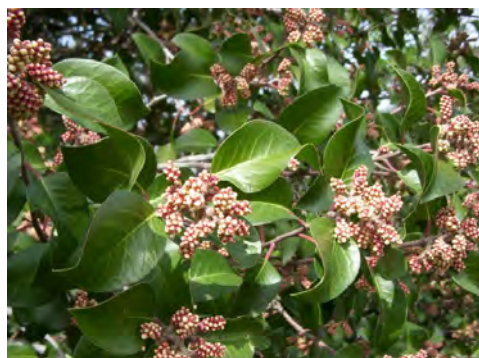


Do you need a native drought-tolerant plant for your garden? Well, look no further.

Rhus ovata, commonly known as sugar bush or sugar sumac, is a shrub or small tree found growing in the canyons and slopes of San Diego County. It is a long-lived plant, up to 100 years, with aromatic, evergreen foliage and pretty flowers. This plant is very drought tolerant and prefers well-drained soil in a sunny location. It is good at controlling erosion and tolerates a wide variety of soils. The plants are incredibly healthy, and typically will appear green and lush throughout the entire dry season without any supplementary water. The biggest downside of this plant is that it can get huge, often more than 8 to 15 feet tall and 30 feet wide.

Rhus ovata is great in fire-prone areas. After fires, Sugar Bush can re-sprout from its unburned root crown. Its seeds need the heat from the fire to grow, so fires help this plant propagate.

The Sugar Bush has ovate, leathery leaves of a dark green glossy color with stiff panicles of flowers. You can recognize the plant during its flowering season from April to early June as it forms 5-petaled flowers that appear to be pink. However, upon closer examination, you may notice that the flowers are white to pink with red sepals.



This plant has quite a history in San Diego County as it was quite useful to the native people.

The Kumeyaay have diverse uses for the plant, including for food, medicine, fire-wood, or construction material. They collected the berries and ate them raw, or dried them and ground them into mush. The children would peel the roots and shoots of the sugar bush and eat them raw due to their sugary content. An infusion of leaves was drunk as a remedy for colds. This infusion was also used for chest pains and coughs. The leaves and stems were also infused in tea as an anesthetic for women going through labor. The same treatment was also applied to animals going through colic or birth, except with the infusion being made from the leaves only.

The seeds are not edible.

The leaves of this plant are rich in tannin. They can be collected as they fall in the autumn and used as a brown dye or as a mordant. An oil is extracted from the seeds. It attains a tallow-like consistency on standing and is used to make candles. These burn brilliantly, though they emit a pungent smoke. The sap is tapped and used as a lacquer. A yellow dye is obtained from the wood. A wax obtained from the fruit is used to make candles, floor wax, varnish, etc.

Rhus plants have been confirmed to contain flavones, cardanols, bichalcones, and chemicals which may have antimicrobial properties, and high concentrations of *R. ovata* extract have been proven to have antibacterial properties that impede the growth of gram-positive bacteria like *Staphylococcus*, but not gram-negative bacteria like *E. coli* or fungi. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhus_ovata/

CAUTION: “There are some suggestions that the sap of this species can cause a skin rash in susceptible people, but this has not been substantiated.” DO NOT EAT THE INNER SEED





2022 Membership Form

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Poway, CA 92064

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AMERICAN KESTREL